

NIGERIA PR REPORT

2020

Inside the Public Relations and
Communications Industry in Nigeria


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ABOUT THE NIGERIA PR REPORT

Nigeria PR Report is the country's first-ever annual report on Public Relations, dedicated to gathering, chronicling and analyzing data on trends, perceptions, challenges and prospects within the industry.

The goal of Nigeria PR Report is to purposefully place Nigeria on the global marketing communications map by producing annual analyses and providing valuable insights that can help build a world-class industry.

The report is prepared for the use of agency CEOs, brand managers, students, teachers, institutions, journalists, consultants, regulatory bodies and researchers.



ABOUT BHM RESEARCH & INTELLIGENCE

BRI, an independent intelligence team working from Nigeria serves to gather and analyze data for brands and organizations in public relations, advertising, ICT and Media.

A division of Black House Media (BHM), a leading full-service media and Public Relations agency, BRI has produced all the editions of the Nigeria PR Report since inception, the 2017 Social4Media Report and BHM's Guide to Public Relations, among other projects.

For more information, please send an email to info@bhmng.com or call 0700BHMGROUP



ABOUT PLAQAD

Plaqad is a social network connecting brands and individuals to content creators, publishers and influencers.

Plaqad allows users to organize or participate in content trading and publicity placement on listed blogs, websites, and social media services around the world.

It is designed for individuals and organisations that want to get the word out about their products, services and ideas, and for content creators and influencers seeking to monetize their platform and influence.

Plaqad sits at the intersection of media, marketing and technology and heavily leverages technology to help brands connect with their target audiences in a measurable, effective and affordable way.

For more information, please visit www.plaqad.com
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Compass Insights is a boutique business advisory outfit based in Nigeria, that provides accessible data-driven insights for businesses to improve customer engagement and satisfaction. Our services ensure that across industries, brands are able to convert customers to loyal ambassadors while optimizing resources spent on customer acquisition. At Compass Insights, we work with businesses to positively reform customer service and sustainable business growth across West Africa.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	8
INTRODUCTION	13
PART 1: RESEARCH FINDINGS	14
STATE OF THE NIGERIAN PR INDUSTRY	15
• Quest for Relevance	15
• Managing Industry Relationships	15
• Internal Growth	16
• Training	16
• Service Delivery	16
• A Learning industry based on Research and Development	17
METHODOLOGY	17
RESEARCH FINDINGS	18
• Years of operation	18
• Size of Agency	19
• Annual revenue	20
TALENT RETENTION IN THE PR INDUSTRY	21
PROFITABILITY	23
• Revenue Performance	23
• Client Base	23
GROWTH: THE KEY IS IN CLIENT ENGAGEMENT	24
• Serviced Sectors	25
WHAT ARE THE SERVICES BEING OFFERED TO CLIENTS?	26
• Services Offered	26
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGING CLIENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19	27
ADVISING CLIENTS DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC	27
THE NIGERIAN PR PROFESSIONAL FOR THE FUTURE	29
TOOLS FOR PR SUCCESS	29
CONCLUSION - IMPROVING THE PR INDUSTRY IN 2020 AND BEYOND	33
PART 2: PERSPECTIVES ON IMPROVING NIGERIA'S PR INDUSTRY	38
• CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION - MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN PR -Yomi Badejo-Okusanya	39
• LEADING EFFECTIVELY FOR GROWTH IN THE PR INDUSTRY - Olusegun McMedal	42
• DIGITAL MEDIA AND PR: THE PATH TO GROWTH FOR AGENCIES IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL - Moliehi Molekoa	46

• WHY BRANDS MUST INCLUDE INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THEIR PR STRATEGY - Bada Akintunde-Johnson	48
• WHY PR PROFESSIONALS MUST BECOME MARKETING GENERALISTS - Femi Falodun	52
• INFLUENCER MARKETING AND THE TRENDS SHAPING A POST-COVID19 PERIOD - Gbenga Sogbaike	55
• 10 BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS EFFECTIVELY - Enitan Kehinde	58
• 20 BEST TOOLS FOR EVERY PR PROFESSIONAL - Precious Nwachukwu	62
• THE SCIENCE OF LIVE VIDEOS AND THE ART OF GETTING IT RIGHT - Enitan Kehinde	65
• ADAPT OR DIE: THE TWO OPTIONS COVID-19 PRESENTS ENTERTAINMENT BRANDS. - Njideka Akabogu	68
• HOW NIGERIA'S DIGITAL NATIVES USED SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN - ID Africa	70
• SOCIAL ENGINEERING IS THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT WE SHOULD ALL BE EATING - Sharon Grey	72
• HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE'S SEO - Leye Makanjuola	74
• JUNKYARDS, REVERSE ENGINEERING, AND EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING WITH VISUAL DESIGN - Kayode Olowu	76
• HOW TO GROW YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM IN 2020 - Plaquad	78
• 5 QUICK WAYS TO GENERATE MORE ENGAGEMENT ON FACEBOOK - Plaquad	80
• THE INCREASINGLY WELCOME PROSPECT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING - Plaquad	82
• 8 THINGS THE SOCIALCRED APP TAUGHT US ABOUT USING SOCIAL MEDIA - Plaquad	84
• HOW TO GET ORGANIC INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS - Plaquad	86
• HOW TO GROW INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS FOR A BUSINESS - Plaquad	88

• 5 REASONS WHY YOU NEED TO GET ON TIKTOK NOW - Plaquad	90
• HOW TO INCREASE YOUR ENGAGEMENT ON TWITTER - Plaquad	92
PART 3: REGULATORY BODIES OF NIGERIA'S PR INDUSTRY	94
A. PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANTS' ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (PRCAN)	95
• Enabling law	95
• Code of Consultancy Practice	95
• Criteria for Admission	95
• How to Apply	95
B. NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS (NIPR)	96
• Objectives	96
• Membership Criteria	96
• NIPR Code of Ethics	96
PART 4: ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN PUBLIC RELATIONS IN NIGERIA	100
PRCAN: CODE OF CONSULTANCY PRACTICE	101
CODE OF ETHICS OF NIPR	103
ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN PUBLIC RELATIONS	105
PART 5: MEASUREMENT IN PR	112
• Explaining PR's Barcelona Principles	113
• How the Barcelona Principles have been updated	116
PART 6: PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCIES IN NIGERIA	118



INTRODUCTION

- AYENI ADÉKÚNLÉ SAMUEL

When we planned for the 2020 Nigeria PR Report, we had no idea of how the year would turn out. These are very unique and interesting times as our choice to have the report focus on sustainable growth has now come into focus with the adverse effects of CoronaVirus.

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the world as we know it, and for the Public Relations industry, it has meant asking very pertinent questions about the role we play, and the role we ought to play in ensuring Public Relations provides the right services in a dynamic world.

Sitting comfortably atop that list is communication. How we ensure that our clients are able to communicate effectively with their stakeholders and how we work to ensure that even in such uncertain times, we are able to remain relevant in an ever changing environment is key.

There are also internal factors to consider as with our partners, suppliers and employees, we need to constantly ensure growth and evolution to make room for adjustment to the ever-changing climate.

Since its maiden edition, the aim of Nigeria PR Report has been to use research to provide facts and statistics about the Public Relations industry in order to help practitioners improve on building better careers and business models, and eventually create a more sophisticated industrial environment for all stakeholders. And since 2015, there have been some transformations in the PR field.

What constitutes Public Relations continues to evolve as more communication channels present opportunities to connect with our audience, while also presenting the need to deeply understand what the channels can and ought to do, requiring strategic direction and in some cases, restraint to ensure communication remains effective.

There is a lot of action and we need data to be able to capture them, yet data itself comes with its own challenges. The research focuses on the general perception of the industry, challenges it faces, talents and creativity in the industry, work satisfaction and opportunities for growth, upcoming trends and measures for success amongst others.

We have seen on the global leadership front, the impact delayed communication and management of information can have on businesses and lives. More than ever, Public Relations remains relevant, particularly in these dynamic times.

The importance of the report to the Public Relations industry in Nigeria can not be overemphasized. By modeling well-founded world reports such as the Holmes Report, World Development Report, Relevance Report, the Nigerian PR Report team continues to hope to create a standard global report that can easily be used for referencing details, instances and facts about the industry.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

STATE OF NIGERIA'S PR INDUSTRY

CONCLUSION

STATE OF THE NIGERIA PR INDUSTRY - GROWING SUSTAINABLY IN DYNAMIC TIMES

Growth can mean several things and manifest in different ways: internal growth, external growth, more in terms of numbers or more in terms of specialization. If we see growth as an elastic band, we can expand in multiple directions. Our industry is poised for growth.

In fact, the time has never been more right. Why is this? We are operating in a fast-paced, interconnected environment. Clients are realizing that they are not able to manage all the aspects of their organization and we need to be able to let them know what we can do.

The Quest for Relevance

Firstly, on the demand side, there is still a lot of work to do to ensure that clients understand the need for and importance of public relations function to their organization and brand's success. It is important that we continue to play a key role in educating clients.

Secondly, clients need to break out of traditional PR functions and services to adopt more modern PR campaign strategies. To do this effectively, we need to convince clients of our specialization and competencies in a way that further deepens the trust and foster greater collaborations.

The rise of influencers has given agencies a run for their money as clients now go directly to these individuals. How can we better project our value in managing these relationships? We need to articulate this value better, especially as we understand what works; and should be able to have more pricing benchmarks to improve transparency and quality in the influencer marketing space. These are opportunities

that we can explore.

In addition, there is a greater spend on advertising and digital marketing (including influencer marketing) than on PR according to 53 per cent of PR agencies surveyed. This may be due to the quick visibility and ability to reach target customers provided by advertising and digital marketing. In some cases, it may also be as a result of a lack of a detailed understanding of PR. So we need to do more to strengthen our value proposition to the market.

Overwhelmingly, there is an agreement that clients require non-traditional services in addition to traditional services. However, the question of whether or not the PR agency is to provide these non-traditional services remains unanswered, with 56 per cent of agencies reporting that clients are not willing to come to PR agencies for these non-traditional services.

Yet, there are opportunities for PR as clients move towards more cost-effective integrated marketing communications solutions. Public Relations can be a real asset to the business world given its role in building and managing a positive image for clients.

Managing Industry Relationships

Media is important and it is necessary to build relationships that are long-lasting, which will see the media as real partners, who are able to provide third party endorsement, believability and spread. Conversely, the media will see PR as a provider of strategic content and news for its audience. Within this is the market place.

With the commercialization of the media, new media has dominated the industry, resulting, in some degree, to unprofessionalism in the media industry. There is a wider role for government to play

in effective regulation, as well as a need for the industry itself to adhere to codes of conduct and its prescribed ethics.

Trust, across all levels, for media outlets, for clients and even between PR agencies is important to foster more collaborations which the industry desperately needs, to lead to sustainable growth. It is currently a case of getting a piece of the pie, whilst there is ample room to come together to create a 'bigger pie'.

One important way to get it right is to work on forging long-lasting relationships with the media. New recruits into the industry, regularly and from time to time, should be provided with refresher courses on how to engage appropriately with the media.

Internal Growth

Coming to the supply side, we need to attract the right talent, and this goes into our recruitment processes, together with the training offered, and the motivation to remain in the industry, and in the agency. All these contribute to the retention of the right talent.

Churn is necessary in any industry, however, we have to ensure we are able to keep our best and brightest talent who can continue to move the industry forward. This is where PR leadership can play a role, articulating and defining career paths for the industry. It also presents opportunities for the Human Resources function that caters to PR professionals.

Internal growth is perhaps the most important growth of all as this directly impacts on how we are able to meet and exceed clients' needs.

Training

One of the key challenges in the industry is effective and adequate training. 60 per cent of organizations have training programmes

for their employees while 40 per cent of organizations do not. For those who do have training programmes, it is important that the programme is comprehensive to include the core skills of a PR professional, together with an all-round training on the skills for success to develop expert PR professionals.

To better serve clients, agencies need to be at the cutting edge of global technology offerings. It is not enough to compete simply on price - the world is a global village and external markets see the potential of the Nigerian PR industry. We need to ensure we are able to provide excellent quality service to our clients.

This requires specialization, and an ability to focus on all elements of training staff; from new entrants into the industry to regular training on communication skills, understanding ethics of PR, client service quality, and research among others.

Service Delivery

Another avenue for development is the quality of briefs provided to the media. There should be a focus on the quality, with creative stories, and a clear brief. It is also time to go to the very basics, understanding what a press release should be, and how to provide stories and leads to the media.

One way to do this is to situate the story within a broader news story, a wider angle that can provide subtle messaging for the brand. Yes, there is a time and place for more overt campaigns, but these are different from news stories.

In addition, PR professional needs to be creative. Creativity goes beyond content creation to include how client strategies are developed and implemented, the ability to 'create' memorable stories and campaigns such as those identified as most notable PR campaigns in 2019: Pepsi's Naija All The Way, Dettol Clean Naija, Maltina 1000 Smiles, GTB Fashion Week,

"Access The Stars" Campaign by Access Bank and Nigerian Breweries, Access Diamond Valentine Campaign, Livespot X Festival, OneManOneVote for the Nigerian elections, and Marlian Fest among others.

The Nigerian PR industry is not without its challenges, some of which come from the wider macroeconomic environment. However, there are certain supply-side and demand-side issues that if resolved, may contribute to the sustainable growth of the industry.

A Learning Industry Based on Research and Development

PR agencies have extensive experience that is not fed into the learning system of the organization and/or the industry.

Agencies and Organisations need to share knowledge from their stories, experiences and case studies with each other and the academia so that we can become a true learning industry. Some of these insights can be presented at seminars and conferences to contribute to the growth of the industry. It is important that we build a community where professionals can relate and share experiences and then look to see how local context-based solutions can be arrived at to meet clients' needs.

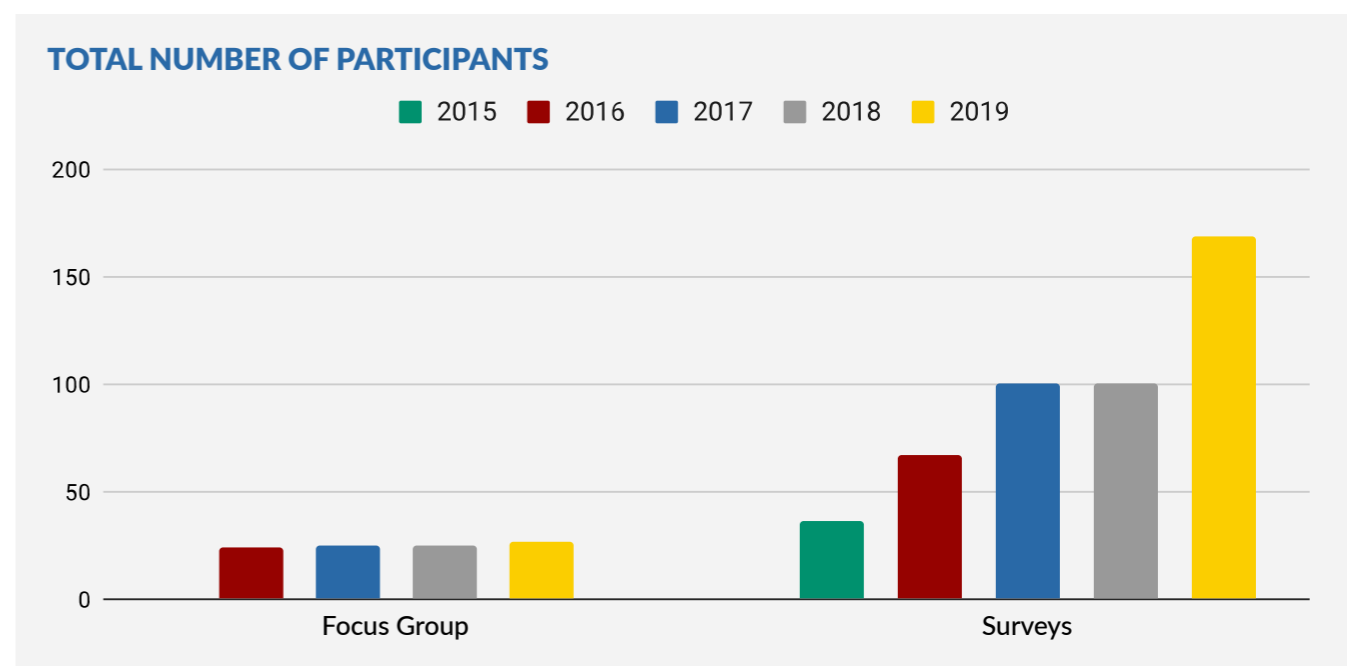
Overall, there needs to be a focus on continuous improvement, across the various elements of the PR function. The future of PR is very dynamic but if we do not adapt, we stand the risk of being redundant. Hence, the status quo is not sustainable. This requires a keen focus on trends – the industry needs more in-depth research to be able to analyse and predict trends – and the ability to adapt quickly in a bid to offer clients better quality service.

How do we create stronger platforms to enable faster evolution and the exploration of new avenues? How do we incorporate other skills and expertise such as research, analysis and insights to improve our value proposition to clients?

This requires us to think of the whole rather than simply the individual organization, and it is important, right now, in 2020, to focus on the industry, as we realize we truly need each other to thrive.

METHODOLOGY

Our report is based on the analysis of PR activity in Nigeria in 2019, together with surveys and focus group discussions with PR companies, media professionals and clients of Nigerian PR companies to provide



comprehensive and reliable information about the state of the PR industry in Nigeria.

The respondents were PR professionals working as self-employed or in agencies, media professionals and verified existing clients of PR companies or buyers of PR services.

This year, a total of 196 people contributed to the Nigeria PR report survey and focus group discussions. The contributions are the highest we have received so far and we hope to continue to increase participation in the surveys, in this way capturing the data as to the PR industry in Nigeria. Three focus group discussions were conducted with PR

consultants, media professionals and PR clients to provide a robust overview of the industry.

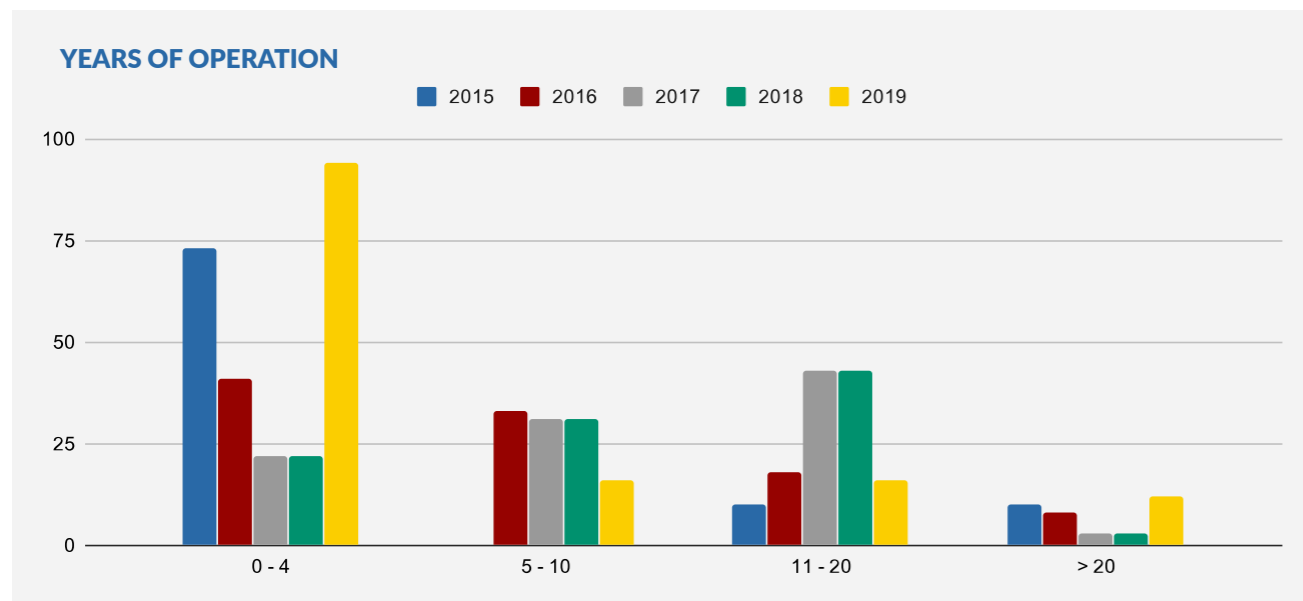
Since 2015, the aim of Nigeria PR Report has been to utilize research in providing facts and statistics about the Public Relations industry in order to help practitioners build better careers and businesses while facilitating a more sophisticated industrial environment for all stakeholders. We have compiled the results from our data collection over the past five years in the findings that follow.

Please note that the PR report for 2017 and 2018 was combined, and so for completeness, we have represented the data for 2017 and 2018 as equal.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

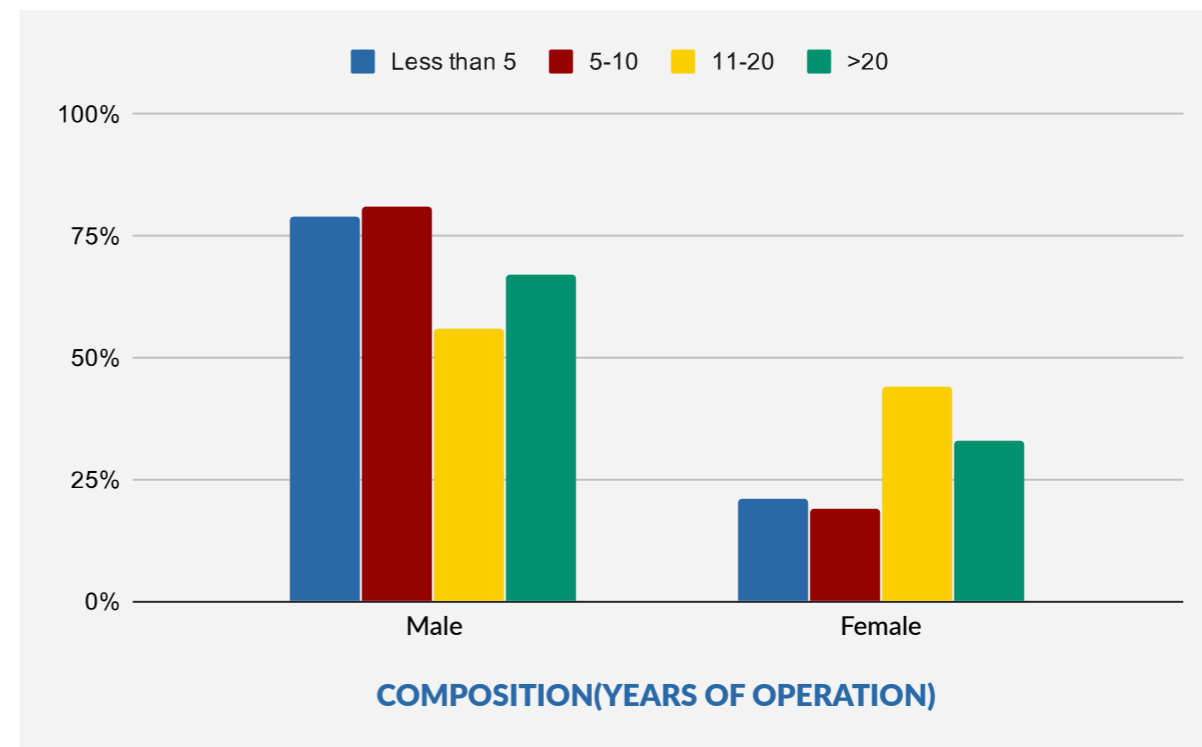
According to the table below, there was an increase in the number of public relations agencies in the industry in 2019, with 68 per cent of respondents having been in operation in the industry for less than five years.

12 per cent have been in operation for 5-10 years and only nine per cent in operation for over 20 years. In terms of balance, 21 per cent of respondents who have been PR professionals for less than five years were women, 19 per cent of those in operation for 5-10 years.

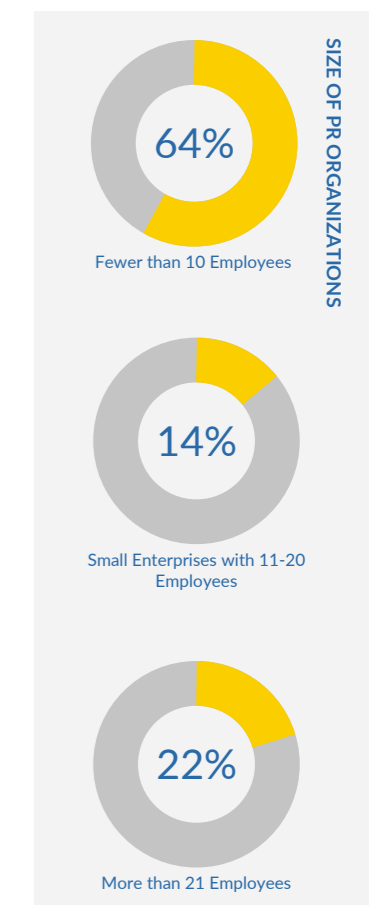
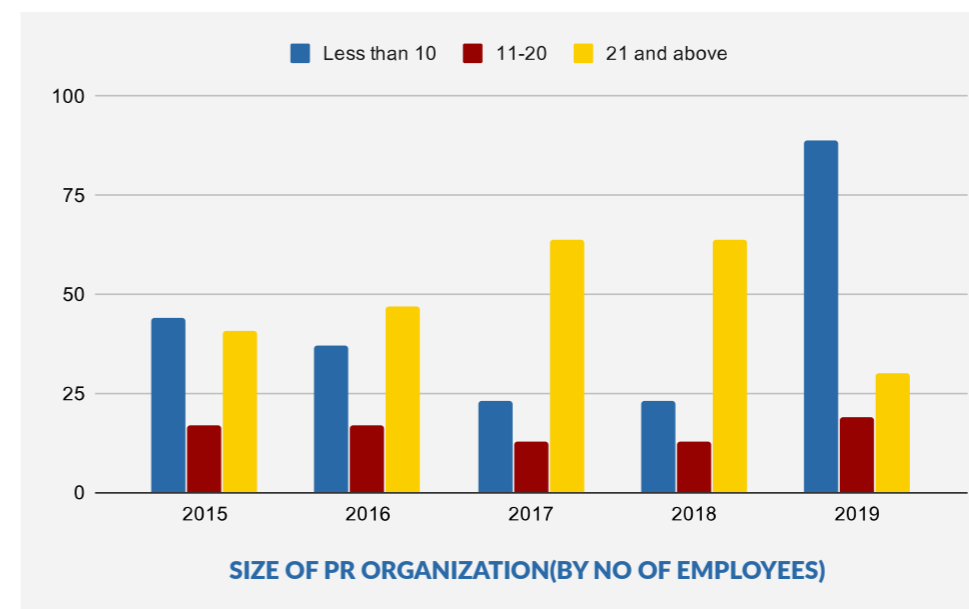


We analysed the gender composition of the PR organizations within the industry. The industry remains male-dominated at 74 per cent with women comprising 26 per cent of the industry. Drilling down on this, we analysed based on the age of the agencies, to identify if there are any time-bound factors.

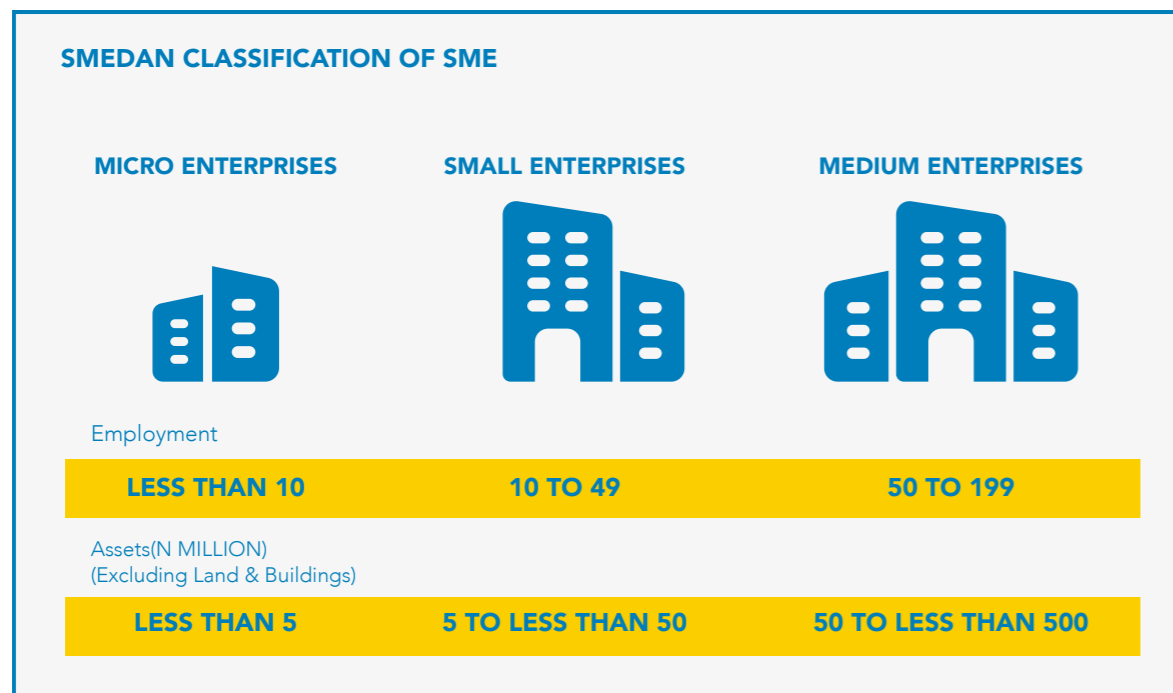
Younger agencies appear to have a higher proportion of men with women comprising only 21 per cent of agencies under five years old. At the older agencies of 11-20 years, women comprise 44 per cent of staff.



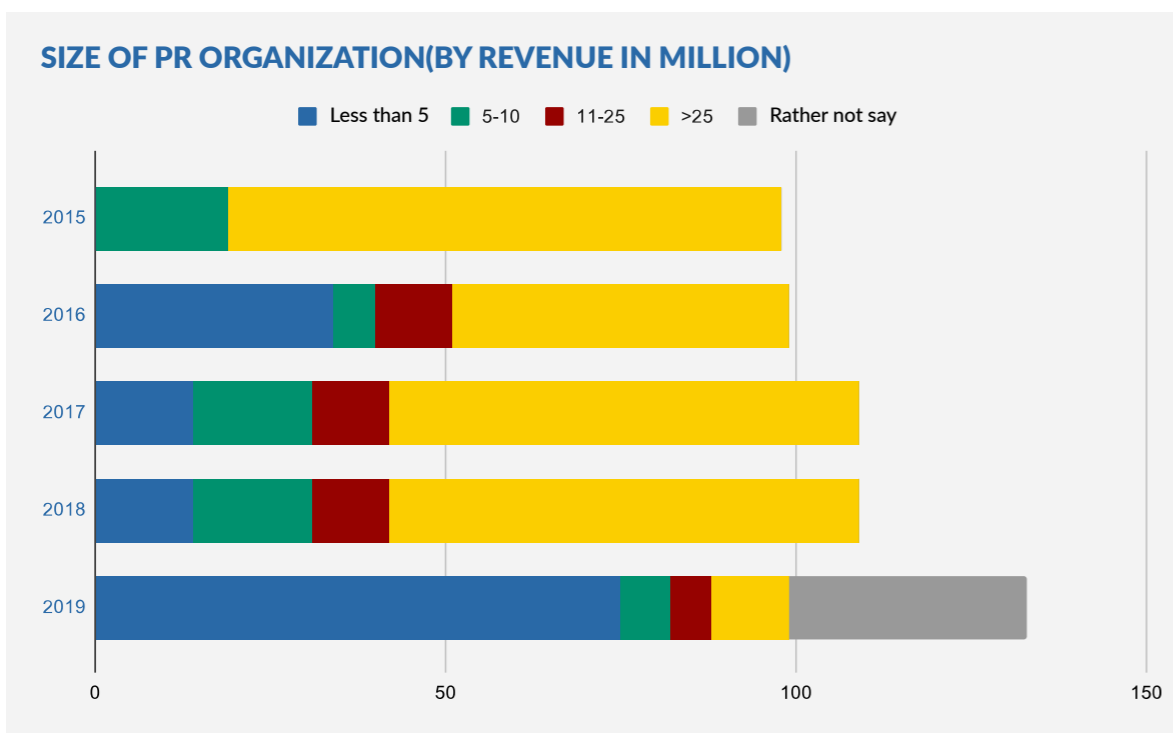
Together with the new entrants into the industry corroborating this finding, we see that 64 per cent of the new agencies have fewer than ten employees, 14 per cent are small enterprises with 11-20 employees and 22 per cent with more than 21 employees as represented in the graph below.



From the graph above, we see that most of the PR agencies are within the SME band, with the 64 per cent of respondents qualifying by the number of employees as micro-enterprises based on the number of employees as defined by The Small and Medium Enterprises Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN).



It is very difficult to obtain exact revenue figures for PR agencies in Nigeria. However, an attempt to group respondents by revenue confirms the micro-enterprise classification for the Nigerian PR industry provided above, with 56 per cent of participants reporting revenue of less than N5 million (five million naira) as displayed in the table below.



Overall, there needs to be a focus on continuous improvement, across the various elements of the PR function. The future of PR is very dynamic but if we do not adapt, we stand the risk of being redundant.

TALENT RETENTION IN THE NIGERIA PR INDUSTRY

Attracting and retaining the right talent within the PR industry in Nigeria emerged as one of the top five challenges the industry faces. This is understandable, given the importance of people to excellent service delivery, client satisfaction and the growth of the business. But talent is not only important to the external growth of the organization, but the costs involved in terms of time and expense to recruit, interview, and train new employees also need to be considered too.

Then for trained employees that go on to work in other organizations, they also take with them the experience and know-how, adding to further costs for the organization.

What then needs to be done to firstly make the PR industry more attractive to new entrants into the industry? There needs to be a clear understanding of the role of the public relations professional and the set of skills required for a successful career. It is also important to define possible career paths, so as to attract the best minds into the industry.

To do this, they need to be equipped with adequate training to go from the basics of writing and communication, ethics, working in a team, time management, to include more specialized skills tailored to the various job roles. One example to learn from can be the graduate trainee programme model where new graduates are put through various aspects of PR so that they get work experience and can select the areas that align with their interests and abilities.

This is particularly important in the industry as it stands, where 70 per cent of the industry have less than five years of work experience as PR professionals.

Even for those with 5-10 years of experience (18 per cent), there are opportunities for PR training programmes to equip them



How do we retain good talent?

According to Yomi Badejo-Okunsanya of CMC Connect Burson Cohn & Wolfe, the real area to focus on for PR agencies is the retention of middle management staff.

He explains that agencies need a long-term view to understand what they want to achieve. Once this is done, it becomes clear that mid-level managers are crucial to the success of the agency.

with middle management skills.

Who can do this? The responsibility falls on PR Professionals with 10 to 20 years of experience (5 per cent of the industry) and those with over 20 years of experience (7 per cent) to provide real-life examples for the younger generation to learn from. We have a responsibility to build the industry for the future.

There are some areas that the younger professionals may have more strengths in, for example, digital and social media, however, we can infuse with those digital skills more of the spirit of PR and an understanding of the history of the industry, to truly create a sense of pride and connection.

How do we retain good talent? According to Yomi Badejo-Okunsanya of CMC Connect Burson Cohn & Wolfe, the real area to focus on for PR agencies is the retention of middle management staff. He explains that agencies need a long-term view to understand what they want to achieve. Once this is done, it becomes clear that mid-level managers are crucial to the success of the agency.

This is because they have a clear knowledge of their role and relevant years

of experience - this intellectual capital needs to be retained.

In many PR organizations, there are generally the departmental heads and operational managers who are at the unique position to interface between entry-level staff and senior management. Losing a middle manager can be costly to an organization especially given the time it can take to recruit someone else, and the time it takes to bring them up to speed.

The need to retain mid-level managers becomes even more apparent when we consider the gender composition of senior management in PR. Not only are we losing mid-level managers, but we are also losing our female mid-level managers according to Omawunmi Ogbe of GLG Communications. Although women dominate PR and Marketing, it is contrasting to note that the majority of the top positions in the industry, across agency and regulatory bodies are occupied by men.

One reason for this may be the lack of flexible working schemes. We need to look at how to make it easier for women to work within the industry, to strike a balance that can ensure we are able to retain the talent and unique perspectives women bring to the industry.

As such, more focus needs to be placed on retaining mid-level PR managers in Nigeria. We are not doing enough. What strategies can we adopt? Firstly, PR agencies need to demonstrate keen leadership that communicates the organization's vision and distils the vision into measurable expectations. One useful way to achieve this is by regular communication, team meetings with middle-management to understand perspectives and give a voice to the PR managers.

Setting a structure for managing performance using performance management systems can also contribute to rewarding managers and other team



PR agencies need to demonstrate keen leadership that communicates the organization's vision and distils the vision into measurable expectations.

members within the organization. It is important that this system is built to reward staff well.

The performance management system also helps to define career development expectations, providing more information as to the promotion opportunities within the career path.

It is also important to review the organizational culture and to ensure that it is a harmonious one where the various team members understand their role and feel empowered to achieve their objectives.

Doing all these will contribute to the retention of staff, especially mid-level managers and ensure a lack of disruption to the relationship and networks within the organization in terms of internal systems and processes, as well as between the organization and its stakeholders (teams, clients, suppliers, etc).

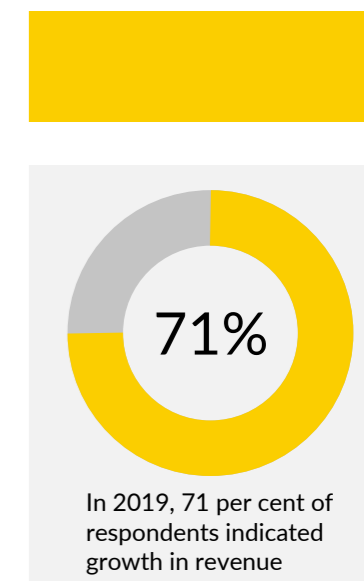
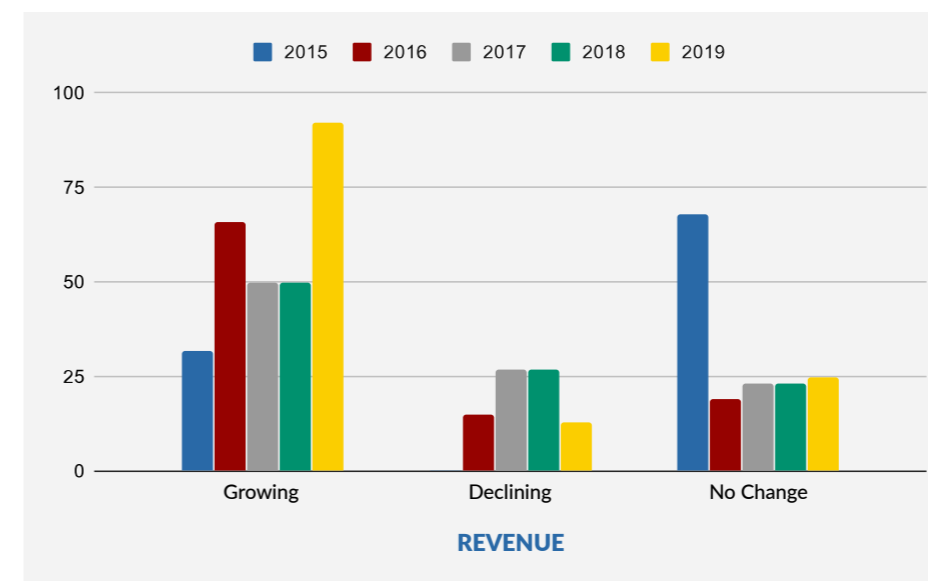


Attracting and retaining the right talent within the PR industry in Nigeria emerged as one of the top five challenges the industry faces.

PROFITABILITY

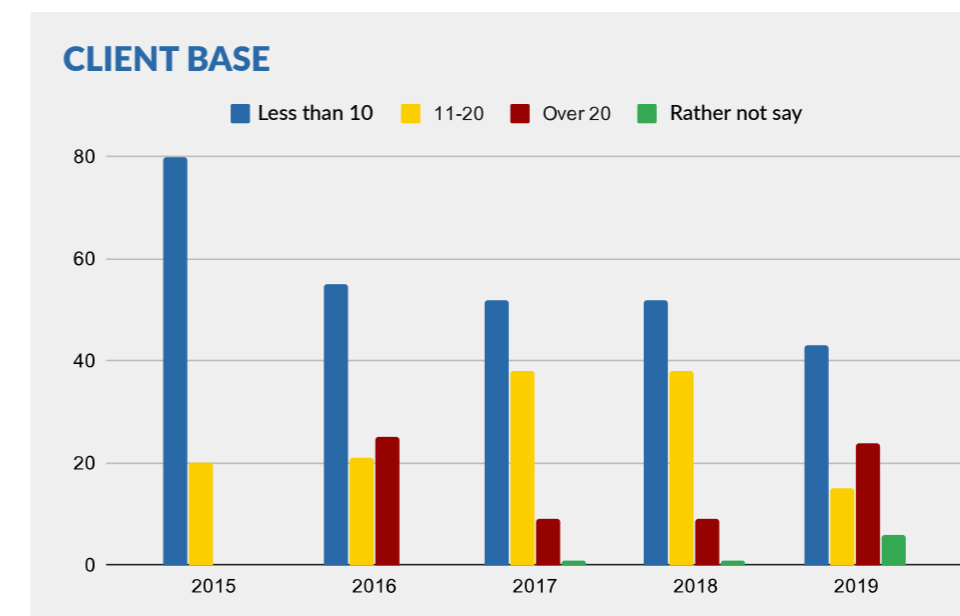
We analysed the revenue growth to ascertain the performance of the industry. In 2015, 68 per cent of respondents had reported that their revenue plateaued in 2015, and in 2016, 15 per cent of respondents reported a decline in revenue which was in line with the Nigerian recession.

In 2019, 71 per cent of respondents indicated growth in revenue and 10 per cent reporting a decrease in revenue and 19 percent with revenue at the same level as 2018 figures.



From the table below, the client base in the Nigerian PR industry is quite small with 49 per cent of respondents reporting a client base with fewer than 10 clients.

17 per cent of respondents had a client base of 11-20 clients, this was the lowest reported figure since we started collating the PR report. 27 per cent of respondents indicated a client base of over 20 clients.



GROWTH: THE KEY IS IN CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

A customer-centric organization comes from a solid client engagement strategy. Insight piece 1 focused on the internal workings of the organization. This piece looks at client engagement as a strategy for growing a PR agency.

Client relations and management was listed as a recurring challenge in the industry, hence it is important for us to look at how we position ourselves to clients, and how we deliver value. It requires going beyond the mere delivery of a brief, a simple transactional relationship towards a more concerted approach at client engagement.

Competing on price is a race to the bottom.

A great customer service strategy is what sets your business apart and especially for PR where our focus is on communicating the right information about our client's activities to the right people, at the right time, using the right channels.

If this is what we provide to our clients, helping them to engage better with their various stakeholders, how much more that we do the same for clients.

The fundamental principle is for us to do great work always and not get comfortable, especially with an existing client. Client retention is an important component of growth because other agencies are trying to capture your share of the market. So be professional at all times and provide a consistent level of attention to detail.

It is more expensive to convert a new client than it is to retain one. It is important to maintain the basics; regular communication, through a mix of emails, phone calls and in-person meetings. Sometimes, it is the person you see regularly or hear from often that remains top of mind when you have a new brief.

It is also important to be proactive at all

times to show responsibility, and even when you do not know or are unable to deliver, to show vulnerability.

Client engagement is the key to business growth. PR agencies need to ensure a customer-centric approach to business. This cannot be left to chance. It has to be a deliberate effort to be customer-focused.

One way to do this is to communicate regularly what you can do for your clients, positioning this as solutions to their needs. Sometimes, we need to state what we think is obvious, listing all the various services and expertise your agency provides as well as examples, so clients know how it can apply in their situation. Once this is done, the next step is to let clients know that you understand their business and know their needs. establish a trust-based relationship with your clients.

It is about clear communication, setting expectations and timelines, being transparent about all fees and charges. When delivering services, a focus on integrity is paramount both to the client and to the delivery of the client's brief. We need to ensure we track these and provide regular reports to keep the client abreast of activities and impact.

According to Moliehi Molekoa of Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants, successful customer engagement goes beyond mass marketing emails with upsell calls-to-action. It requires brands to build relationships and experiences that are more human and authentic. There needs to be a clear, responsive, feedback loop for clients to be able to feedback to their agency contact-person.

Ensuring we meet both the needs to engage better with our clients, as well as engaging with our clients' audience requires a strategic investment in key channels.

Organizations should invest in a seamless Omnichannel experience by investing only in the channels that drive engagement



Artificial intelligence is already doing tasks that were previously exclusively done by highly skilled professionals.

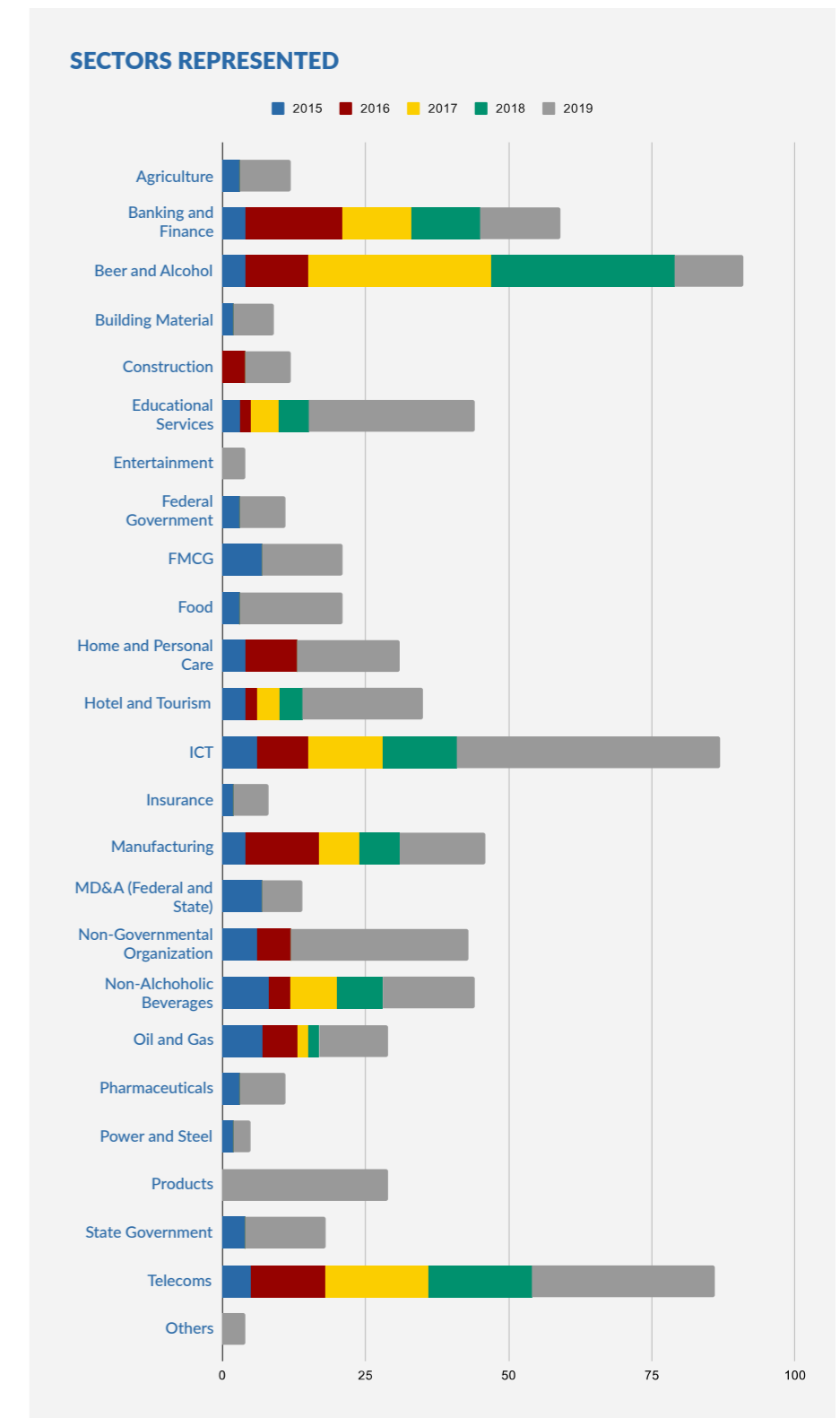
and value with their target audience, whether that is on podcasts, social media, SMS, LinkedIn, or others. The goal for strong customer engagement is to make every brand touchpoint feel as seamless and low effort as possible.

Artificial intelligence is already doing tasks that were previously exclusively done by highly skilled professionals. For example, the New York Times reported in 2019, that almost a third of content published by Bloomberg News, the international wire service, was produced using AI.

Today, we use social media listening tools to track conversations on Twitter, search engines select stories for us based on our interest, artificial intelligence filters adverts that people see according to their online behaviour and even suggest influencers to follow on social media.

Lanre Ekemode of LSF|PR shares for example that one way to improve client engagement is to keep up to date, to be able to advise on new avenues to maximise returns on investment.

For example, for influencer



marketing, brands are entering into exclusive agreements with influencers, barring collaboration with competitors on agreed platforms and/or during a stipulated period in a bid to protect marketing investment.

This is important to capture market share of their followers, provide consistency,

credibility and most importantly, allow the investment to result in meaningful connections with consumers.

PR professionals remain relevant to unlock the value that technological advancements present and adapt to changing times, with a focus on delivering excellent service quality to clients to ensure growth, for the client, as well as for the agency.



There is significant activity in servicing the ICT, Telecommunications and NGO sectors. There are single-digit spaces which possibly signal market dominance by the few agencies servicing these sectors, and can create opportunities for other agencies to consider working with.

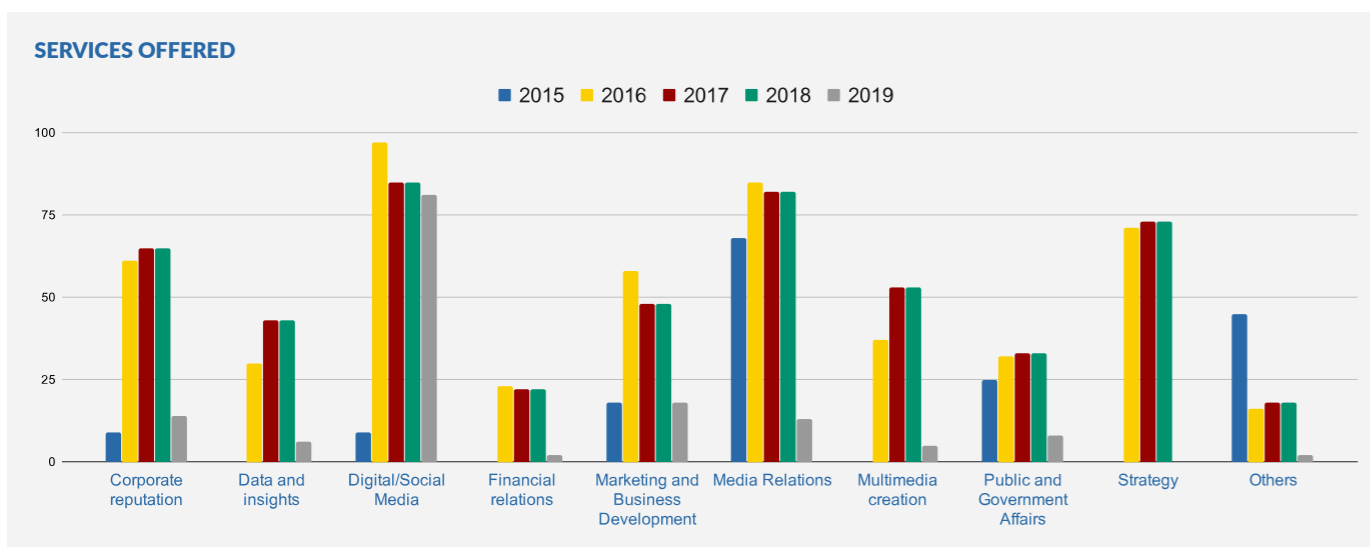
These include the Agriculture, Insurance, Pharmaceuticals, and Power and Steel sectors.

WHAT ARE THE SERVICES BEING OFFERED TO THESE CLIENTS?

The agencies in the industry provide a wide-ranging suite of services to their clients. Digital/social media is ahead of the other services, for three consecutive months.

In 2019, the three most popular services reported were digital/social media, followed, by a large margin by marketing and business development, and corporate reputation.

In 2017 and 2018, the 3 services offered were digital/social media, media relationships and communications strategy.



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19

COVID-19 has compelled PR professionals to work remotely and that comes with a set of challenges, especially considering the context of the Nigerian business environment.

According to findings from our focused-group sessions, the pandemic may have resulted in reduced productivity but also helped PR practitioners to get more attune with modern-day digital applications and work tools even though some challenges persist for team members who are not as digitally savvy.

Another challenge is the issue of work timing structure. PR practitioners stated that clients are breaching the normal timing structure and as such adhering to the normal opening and closing hours have been difficult.

Some of the challenges mentioned by respondents:

- **Productivity** - staff working from home
- **Accountability** - staff working from home
- **Time management** - staff working from home
- Client adaptability to the changing work arrangement

It has also brought about some positives:

- Clients' willingness to adapt to the use of modern technological devices.
- Reduction in face-to-face meetings.
- Most client-agency meetings now happen remotely.

Provided the opportunity for digital application synchronization between clients and PR companies using applications such as Whatsapp, Skype, Google Doc, Zoom, etc.

The focus of the PR industry in this season of COVID-19 should be on how to help clients thrive in the midst of the crisis.

As this period has necessitated a shift from the conventional way of communicating and engaging consumers and partners, PR practitioners have the responsibility to help brands navigate the new normal.

ADVISING CLIENTS DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

As the world continues to make sense of the pandemic, PR and communications professionals must look beyond the immediate interest of brands and consider, very importantly, the wellbeing and interests of consumers.

It is therefore important to not employ the conventional and aggressive brand communication tactics that worked before the pandemic.

Consumers are looking to brands for inspiration, reassurance and safety at this time.

As such, the pandemic is no time for brands to keep quiet and go to sleep. Communication experts must guide the brands in initiating various consumer-focused interventions that meet these needs and also situate themselves positively within consumer conversations.

Brands that shut down during a crisis of this nature have a hard time regaining the attention and the trust of the consumers they abandoned or refused to engage during the crisis.

In conclusion, COVID-19 has further shown



the importance of digital technology and will help communications experts better appreciate the scale of digital disruption that has taken place in the last decade and the change we must embrace.

More than ever, effective communication for brands has become paramount and they look up to the experts in PR and

communications to guide them.

To be able to live up to this responsibility, communication experts must arm themselves with an adequate understanding of digital technology, consumer psychology and how to effectively situate client's business in the mix.

THE NIGERIAN PR PROFESSIONAL FOR THE FUTURE



With the rise of digital and social media, community management, digital build and production, measurement and analytics, content creation, social media management are going to be some of the most required skills for PR agencies in the coming years.

There are other opportunities too including data science and research and without a doubt, the basic requirements of excellent writing and communication skills, creativity, and ability to provide insights from multiple diverse perspectives to be able to provide clients with real solutions that address their immediate and future needs.

TOOLS FOR PR SUCCESS

To prepare you, we have provided a list of the tools you need for success as a PR professional of the future.

In today's digital world, the tools required by a PR professional are quite different from what they used to be, even five years ago. Nowadays, practices are more niche and depending on whether it is a PR agency or a public relations department within an organization.

It also depends on budget and how large the organization is. For startups, the tools required are going to understandably be

leaner.

That said, it is important that the focus is on the type of tools that allow the PR professional to deliver excellent and exceptional service quality, across the key PR channels: media relations, business/media events, speaking engagements, content generation, community relations, social media.

There are other PR channels however, the above-mentioned are the key channels which informed this guide.

1. Directory: Going back to the basics of public relations practice is having an up-to-date directory which contains the names and contact details of key journalists in the sector you serve/represent as well as the days of the week they publish their stories.

Storing their name and contact details on your phone isn't enough and you need to have a working database of journalists that cover key sectors in mainstream media, their positions etc. It does not have to be extensive, and you can build a directory with a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, investing in more money as your business evolves.

2. Content Distribution: It is important to get your news stories out in the media. While the email is the first and most well-known tool for content distribution, there

PURPOSE	TOOL(S) TO USE
CONTENT ANALYSIS	GRAMMARLY
CONTENT DESIGN	CANVA, UNSPLASH, PEXELS, SHUTTERSTOCK, VISME
CONTENT DISTRIBUTION	EMAIL, MAILTRACK.IO, MAILCHIMP, DIRECT MESSAGING ON SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS
DIRECTORY	EXCEL SPREADSHEET, GOOGLE SHEETS
HEADLINE ANALYSER	COSCHEDULE
INFLUENCER OUTREACH	PLAQAD
LISTENING	HOOTSUITE, KEYHOLE
MEASURING AND ANALYSIS	MELTWATER, CISION, COVERAGE BOOK
MEDIA MONITORING AND ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT	GOOGLE AND TALKWALKER ALERTS
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	TRELLO
SENTIMENT ANALYSIS	BRANDSEYE, MELTWATER AND CISION
SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWER AUDIT	FOLLOWER, HYPEAUDITOR, SOCIALCRED
SUBJECT LINE REVIEW	SUBJECT LINE

are other equally important tools that can enhance content distribution. mailtrack.io is a free Chrome extension that lets you know if your email has been delivered or opened.

That way you can follow up with journalists who are yet to open your mail effectively. Social media has proven to be another effective content distribution tool as you can send news stories to journalists through the direct message option on all

the platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

3. Media monitoring and online reputation management: There are a plethora of tools out there most of which are paid for but at the basics, Google and Talkwalker alerts are very useful media monitoring buddies.

You can set up keywords that are not just relevant to your brand but also for your

competition as it is important to see the stories as they happen.

4. Listening: It is not enough to present information to your audience. It is also important to listen to find out what is being said about your brand and enable you to respond to the customers' concerns in a timely manner. Hootsuite allows you to set up multiple tabs around various keywords and you are able to see what customers are saying about that keyword in real-time.

5. Sentiment analysis: This allows you to know how customers feel about your client or brands' activities. Beyond knowing how customers feel, it is also important to feel the pulse of the media as they are gatekeepers of your brand to your target audience and will shape the audience' mind as to how your brand will be perceived.

Sentiment analysis tools are sometimes embedded in most media measuring tools such as Meltwater and Cision or you can try a stand-alone sentiment analysis tool such as Brands Eye.

6. Website analysis: In order to determine the effectiveness and reach of your brand mention(s) on a particular brand platform in comparison to another, website analysis tools are key to track engagement. Alexa and Similar Web are effective as they show you a website's average performance in terms of visits and hit.

7. Social media follower audit: Up to 40% of web traffic is as a result of bot activity. It is important to check your brand's social media following periodically and clean out inactive accounts who serve to inflate follower counts but this is not reflected in the engagement rates. Follower is a great tool for Instagram follower audit.

8. Headline analyser: You need to have one or two content creation tools or two in their kit. Your headline can make or mar your news story. The headline analyser reviews your headline suggestion and gives tips on how to improve it.

Coschedule has a headline analyser you can use. Best part about it is that it's free.

9. Subject line review: To review your email subject based on clickability and how attractive it is to a reader, the aptly named Subject Line is an important tool to use.

10. Content analysis: Grammarly analyses written content based on structure, spelling, punctuation, engagement and others to ensure the content is original and free of mistakes. The plagiarism checker looks through millions of websites and academic journals to verify that your content has not previously appeared elsewhere.

11. Content Design: Canva is an online design tool that offers free templates for turning your content into powerful visuals for use across multiple digital platforms. Unsplash and Pexels also offer free stock images subject to various copyrights.

Shutterstock, although paid for, offers a diverse array of premium stock content from images to vectors, videos, illustration as well as music.

12. Project management: if you work with teams, and even if you do work alone, getting a project management tool such as Trello allows you to manage projects among your team by assigning teammates, setting deadlines, attaching files and integrating checklists to keep track of different steps of a project.

13. Measuring and Analysis: to track campaign performance. Meltwater or Cision allows you to see the platforms that published your stories, analyse the reach, sentiments, number of views and the PR value of the platforms.

Coverage Book combines all your results from a campaign and automatically calculates metrics such as website visits, social shares, domain authority, etc. to show a campaign's effectiveness. It's the perfect tool for dazzling your client.

14. Influencer outreach: as influencer marketing becomes increasingly sought after by clients and is fast replacing traditional forms of marketing, it is important to keep tabs on the key influencers in the segments they serve.

Plaqad is an influencer marketing platform that identifies and manages influencer campaigns from start to finish.



CONCLUSION Improving the Industry in 2020 and Beyond

2020 should see more capacity development in the industry, with webinars, bespoke training programmes for organizations and industry-wide knowledge sharing conferences and seminars. We expect that regulatory and the professional bodies overseeing the PR industry should be more active in ensuring continuing professional development takes place for PR professionals, as well as set and uphold standards for the dynamic business environment agencies have to operate within. Regulations need to be tied to enforcement to ensure adherence.

The lockdown brought about by COVID-19 has shown us that we can work more flexibly than we used to. This needs to continue with more flexible working policies made available to colleagues, especially women to retain more senior talent in the industry.

Our focus should also look at improving the working conditions within our agencies - how are we providing for our team members, what benefits are we offering, what career development opportunities? These will go a long way to attract and retain talent within agencies.

In addition, there is a need to invest in sustainable measurement to track spend and returns for our clients. We need to engage in more data-driven PR strategies for clients to improve the quality of our campaigns and other activities. More research should be carried out on PR in other countries to learn what models and incentives are successful and how these can be adapted to the Nigerian business environment.

There are going to be challenges, no doubt. The industry is going to go through some tough times, but right now, what is needed is a commitment to improving the industry, to collaborate with other agencies, to truly evolve the way we operate and to provide solutions for our clients.

THANK YOU TO OUR SURVEY RESPONDENTS.

Please note we have only listed those respondents who provided their organization's details here.

A Absolute PR Limited
Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Corporate reputation, Marketing and Business Development etc.

Alpha PR
Digital /social media, Corporate reputation, Marketing and Business Development etc.

As+ A Communications
Corporate Reputation, Financial Relations, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

B BD Consult Limited
Corporate Reputation, Financial Relations, Media Relation, Strategy

Bifocal Communications
Corporate Reputation, Financial Relations, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

Black House Media
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Multimedia Creation, Strategy, etc.

Blueflower Limited
Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Marketing and Business Development, Insight, Public Affairs, Strategy etc.

Brooks and Blake Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

BukiHQ Media
Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Marketing and Business Development, Insight, Public Affairs, Strategy etc.

C Caritas Communications
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

C & F Porter Novelli
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

Chain Reactions Limited
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

Compact Comm. Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy

CMC Connect Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy, etc

Concrete Communications
Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Marketing and Business Development, Insight, Public Affairs, Strategy etc.

D Davebrook Limited
Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Marketing and Business Development, Insight, Public Affairs, Strategy, etc.

DKK Nigeria
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Multimedia Creation, Strategy

E Evolve Integrated Services
Corporate Reputation, Financial Relations, Media Relation, Strategy, etc.

F FCB Redline
Corporate Reputation, Financial Relations, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

Fruition Image Africa
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media, etc

H Hally Sports Int. Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Hi-Tek Productions
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Hill+Knowlton Strategies
Corporate Reputation, Financial Relations, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

Hot PR
Digital /Social media, Marketing and business development, Media relation, Public affairs etc.

I ID Africa
Digital/Social Media, Multimedia Creation, Media Relation, Marketing and Business Development, Strategy etc.

Image Consultants Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/ Social Media etc.

Imagelink Communications
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/ Social Media etc.

Integrated Indigo Limited
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

J JSP Corporate Communications
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/ Social Media etc.

L Leap Communications Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/ Social Media etc.

M Marketing Mix & Company
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Mediacraft Associates Limited
Corporate reputation, digital/social media, media relation, financial relations etc.

Mediamark Limited
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/ Social Media etc.

Media Panache
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Multimedia Creation, Public Affairs, Strategy etc.

Messages Inc Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Metro Media
Communications Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/ Social Media etc.

MindshareComms. Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Mike Okereke Consulting Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Mosron Communications
Digital/Social Media, Media Relations, Corporate Communications, Crises Communications & Management etc.

N Nansolyvan PR
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Nadeem Media Consults Ltd
Media relations NECCI Limited Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/ Social Media etc

Neo Media & Marketing Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

O Oyster St. Iyke Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

P PFCAfrica
Communications Limited Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Plaqaad Inc
Digital/Social Media, Media Relations, PR and Marketing Technology

Prizeworth Consulting Limited
Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media

Publicis Consultants

Soulcomm Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media

R R&B Public Relations

Company Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media

Radi8 limited

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Media Relation, Multimedia Creation, Public Affairs, Strategy

Red Gecko Ltd

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Multimedia Creation, Strategy

Red Media Africa

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Multimedia Creation, Strategy

Rexxie empire

Public affairs

Rytkey Concepts Ltd

Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media

S Sesema PR Limited

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy

Silver Bullet

Public Relations Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy

SY&T Communications Strategy**Synthesis**

Communications
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy

T Tanus

Communications Ltd
Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy

The Bobby Taylor Company

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy

The Republic Media Limited

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy

The Quadrant Company

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

Timex Intermedia

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

TPT International Limited

Corporate Reputation, Digital/Social Media, Insight, Marketing and Business Development, Media Relation, Strategy etc.

Tourism Promotions & Comm

Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Corporate reputation, Marketing and Business Development

TruContact Limited

Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Corporate reputation, Marketing and Business Development

W Weber Shandwick Africa

Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Corporate reputation, Marketing and Business Development

Whitewater Limited

Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Corporate reputation, Marketing and Business Development

Wildflower PR and Company

Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media

Winning Concepts

Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media,

Worktainment Ltd

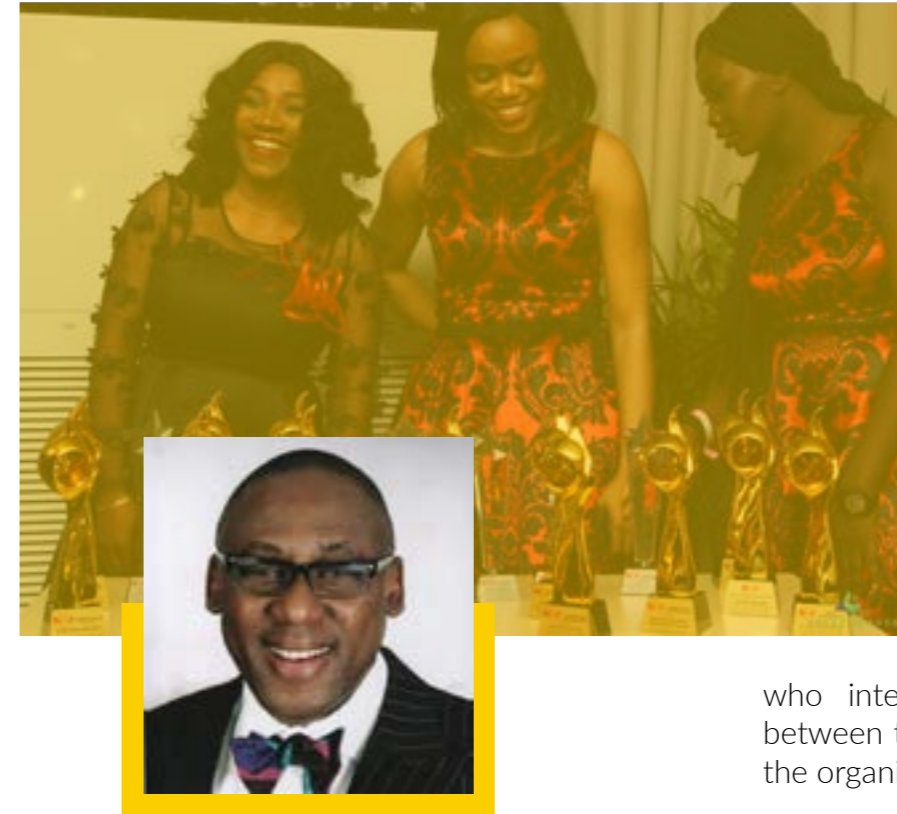
Digital/Social Media, Media Relation, Corporate reputation, Marketing and Business Development

X XLR8

Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.

Z Zebra Stripes

Corporate Reputation, Media Relation, Strategy, Digital/Social Media etc.



market grows, employees have more options, making employee retention even more challenging.

In any organization, PR inclusive, the Middle Management are the set of employees who provide strength as they have the knowledge, experience and also possess the required skill set needed to promote competitive advantage.

They are popularly regarded as being departmental heads and operational managers who interpret and convey information between the workforce and the leaders of the organization.

Employee retention is one of the highest priorities in organizations, particularly regarding middle-level managers. It requires a long-term strategy that aims to identify talented employees, help nurture and utilize their individual talents, so as to meet the growing demands of the business.

Retaining talented middle managers in a PR firm plays an important role in the retention of intellectual capital for the organization while losing these talents not only results in a loss of individual skill and ability but also disrupts the relationship and networks between teams, clients, suppliers and other stakeholders, as well as the structural capital such as systems and processes.

At middle management, employees are either looking for companies with good career development programs, better pay and benefits or want more challenges which makes career development critical to retaining talents.

The major problems plaguing PR agencies, as they struggle to retain talented employees, specifically at the middle organizational level is; Ineffective Retention Strategies.

Conscious efforts should be made to deploy

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION - MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN PR

BY YOMI BADEJO-OKUSANYA fnipr - CMC CONNECT

We are in the middle of a work revolution. Globalization, the rise of Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation paired with a new generation of consumers who desire more personal, intuitive brand experiences, are forcing PR companies to rethink their approach to talent management and acquisition. Employees with capabilities that allow organizations to keep up with this pace of change are now in steep demand with employers struggling to keep them on board.

High employee turnover is worrisome to any employer, considering the expense to recruit, interview, and train new employees, not to mention that these employees may be less adept at their jobs than the experienced workers they are replacing.

As the economy improves and the job

PERSPECTIVES ON THE NIGERIAN PR INDUSTRY

As the economy improves and the job market grows, employees have more options, making employee retention even more challenging.



the various strategies needed for talent retention within the middle management, which include;

1. Leadership: The effectiveness of employee retention tactics in organizations is directly influenced by leaders. Poor and ineffective leadership styles may influence the retention of talented employees. A high level of trust between employees and leaders is associated with employee commitment and ultimately, high employee retention rates.

2. Specific Career Development Strategies:

Career development also can help with retention because employees develop a sense of loyalty for employers who are willing to invest in them. When employees perceive that their organizations encourage career development, they feel more confident about their long-term career path. Likewise, when it is time to hire new employees, career development programs can be attractive to job-seekers.

3. Organizational Culture: Organizational culture refers to the general behaviour of employees, the characteristics of the organization, and the shared meanings within the organization. Having and maintaining a strong and positive organizational culture is imperative for retaining talented employees. It is evident

in the structure of the organization, their values, general working conditions, the atmosphere among the employees, as well as the performance drive of employees. Leaders should articulate and live in accordance with the vision, mission and goals of the organization.

Committed employees become frustrated and develop turnover intentions when they witness their work and input going to waste due to inconsistent strategies and vision.

4. Performance Management:

Performance management is the formal and systematic communication between senior managers and employees regarding behavioural expectations, objectives and goals and ensures that feedback is provided to employees relating to their performance. Performance management is used to identify talented employees as well as to identify and exit employees who sabotage productivity.

As an employee retention strategy, middle managers are often given the opportunity to work with HR managers and senior managers of the organization to understand managerial expectations, the long-term objectives of the organization and targets set by the organization.

This practice develops, in middle managers, an appreciation of what is demanded of themselves and their teams and, in turn, contribute to feelings of job autonomy.

5. Reward management:

Reward management, which is closely associated to, and follows on from the practice of performance management, can also be utilized as a strategy to retain managerial talent. However, the rewards offered to employees must be tailored to suit and satisfy the mid-level managers. While not completely excluding extrinsic rewards, employees at managerial levels generally prefer intrinsic rewards that promote self-fulfilment.

When rewards match the desires of middle

managers, which may differ in employees, it enhances the psychological contract, stimulates commitment, reduces turnover intention and retains the managerial talent.

Summarily, in terms of implementing effective retention strategies for middle management employees, it is recommended that PR agencies focus on these strategies. The leaders in PR agencies should also create healthy relationships between them and employees and their intentions for the organization should be communicated transparently and consistently to create an atmosphere of trust.

HR managers should also work with the leaders to ensure that leadership behaviour and all business practices are ethically sound in implementing leadership retention practices. HR Managers need to ensure alignment between the leaders, the employees and the HR practices in the

organisation.

According to the Right Management study, employees at a company with a favourable career climate are four times less likely to leave than those at a company with an unfavourable career climate. Having these strategies present at their companies will help employees feel encouraged to advance in their career.

Yomi Badejo-Okusanya is the current President of the African Public Relations Association (APRA) and the Group Managing Director of CMC Connect (Perception Managers), one of Nigeria's leading strategic communication groups. His contribution was put together with assistance from Folashade Olorunyomi, Head of Human Capital & Olasunkanmi Ogunniyi, Senior Business Executive at CMC Connect (Perception Managers)





However, the following year was a turbulent one for the young firm. They lost their cash cow account due to poor client service management; it adversely affected their liquidity, and they couldn't serve other accounts nor maintain their high overheads and expensive lifestyles.

Before the end of the second year, the centre could no longer hold, and things fell apart. The business closed

shop and Uche and Demola went their separate ways.

Does it sound familiar?

One of the greatest challenges that can plague any enterprise is leadership. Effective leaders provide vision, guidance, inspiration, confidence, commitment, nurture talents and build teams committed to achieving a common goal.

No wonder, the leading leadership consultant, John C. Maxwell, said, "Everything rises and falls on leadership". Whether things are going right or wrong, leaders must take responsibility. Leaders are made, not born.

Most of the public relations practitioners begin their careers as communication technicians. They spend most of their time writing, producing and placing contents. They rarely have a voice in strategy formulation; their job is simply to execute agreed tactics. Uche and Demola belong in this group.

After several years, the technician moves up in the corporate rung to become the head of communication working together with heads of the units to define and solve problems.

This communication role requires that the

LEADING EFFECTIVELY FOR GROWTH IN THE PR INDUSTRY

BY OLUSEGUN MCMEDAL, NIPR LAGOS

BACKGROUND

The City of Gold Inc. was a startup public relations consultancy established in 2010. It was founded by two friends who resigned their employment with a leading telecoms service company. Uche and Demola were passionate and knowledgeable about the telecoms industry. Naturally, they positioned their consultancy to serve the communications need of the players in the telecoms industry.

In their first year, they secured the account of their former employer and added other accounts. Business was good and like prodigal sons, they quickly acquired high tastes and bought things they didn't need. Life was good.

professional is a part of the leading team in the organization with access to other senior managers.

He is involved in the strategic thinking of the organization, scanning and monitoring trends and advising to make informed decisions. He helps the organization build reputation and goodwill with its stakeholders.

A major predictor of leading effectively is having the top communications executive at the decision-making table. Those in the C-suite are much more likely to have a positive impact on the organization.

THE C-SUITE

Almost all organizations are run by a chief executive officer that is responsible for setting the vision and strategy of the organisation and supervising the activity of his team. The key roles in any organization such as finance, legal, admin and human resources, information services, marketing and communication, serve the operations of the company, and their heads report to the chief executive.

In some cases, the communication function is subordinated under another unit, such as marketing, legal, or administration. When this happens, it becomes difficult for the head of communications to lead effectively and play a meaningful role in the strategic decision-making process. Whereas the communication function brings to the senior team a different perspective from these other roles.

Communication is the only function with eyes on all the internal and external stakeholder of the organization and should be involved in strategic decision making.

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN DECISION MAKING

In the C-suite, executives must make good decisions that positively contribute to the growth of the organization. The ability to make good decisions often defines a good chief executive. But to make good decisions, they need reliable information on various functions.

Since public relation's role is to help the organization in developing and maintaining good relationships, it must provide information about how the organization can achieve this. This is how strategic communications earns its seat in the C-suite.

The communication function looks at all the stakeholders in the organization and uses a variety of tools, tactics and channels to build a reputation and enhance relationships with these publics. The head of communications has an important responsibility to ensure that all key stakeholders are given due consideration when critical decisions are made.

And most importantly, public relations provide strategic counsel to the organization's leaders helping the team in making better decisions. By providing this all-encompassing perspective, the head of communications does much more than execute tactics. This strategic counsel is what chief executives are increasingly seeking in all the members of the C-suite.

By delivering it, the head of communications

A major predictor of leading effectively is having the top communications executive at the decision-making table.



enhances the value of the practice and ensures ongoing participation in charting the future progression of the organisation.

BUSINESS ACUMEN

If one agrees with Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, having a seat in the C-suite is a big deal.

But having a seat at the decision-making table is not a right, it is a privilege which must be earned. To get there, the communication manager must learn the culture of the occupants.

In a recent lecture, Director, Airtel Networks Nigeria, Emeka Oparah, told his audience that he realized that it is not enough to know the practice, one must learn the language of business. He spoke from experience.

At the C-suite, all the members speak the language of business. You hear phrases like margin performance, market capitalization, earnings growth, debentures, capital appreciation, bottom lines, working capital, market share and competitive position.

If the head of communications is not accustomed to using these terminologies and their meanings, he is at a disadvantage as a team member and cannot lead effectively in performing his role.

HOW CEOS VIEW THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

According to a survey of CEOs of large multinational corporations to determine their view of the role of the chief communications officer in executive teams conducted by the Page Society, the most important attribute of the ideal head of communications was a detailed knowledge of the business.

The results of the survey which was released in the Authentic Enterprise

white paper revealed that CEOs believe that their businesses are large and complex entities and that their companies cannot be communicated well if their top communication executive does not intimately understand them.

The CEOs averred that to build persuasive communication programs that advance the objectives of the organization, the communication team, especially those who lead it, must first understand these objectives. They must also understand the context in which the organization is pursuing the objectives – both the business context and in external forces.

BUILDING CREDIBILITY WITH PUBLICS

It is extremely important to build credibility with the publics you are trying to reach. Communication professionals who have a thorough knowledge of their organization and the business are simply more valuable and will be trusted to lead the communication effort.

Communicators must understand the general principles in some fundamental areas of the business such as operations, HR policy, corporate governance code, compliance, legal or accounting, to help them speak more credibly and work as more valued team members.

LEADING EFFECTIVELY FOR GROWTH

As public relations shifts from an emphasis on the technical role of the communicator to the strategic communication role of the manager, the public relations professional must be educated in how the organization is managed. Influence is increased when the practitioner can show that public relations is unique and cannot be substituted by another function.

MAINTAINING CORE COMPETENCIES

Most of the communication practitioners

majored in the arts and humanities, little wonder they are not familiar with the language of business. This limits their ascent to the C-suite.

To lead, they must seek additional educational opportunities like the MBA or other relevant courses. They can learn a


great deal by reading the business media or comb the Internet (the richest library in the world) which provide an endless source of information.

Colleagues in law, finance, operations department, etc. can provide incredible educational opportunities.

Public relations professionals who demonstrate greater management and business skills will get a seat in the C-suite where they can lead effectively and make a greater impact on the organisation and public relations industry in general.

Conscious efforts should be made to deploy the various strategies needed for talent retention within the middle management, which include;

- **Leadership**
- **Specific Career Development Strategies**
- **Organizational Culture**
- **Performance Management**
- **Reward management**



Olusegun McMedal is the Founder/ Team Leader of KENViDO Consulting (a learning company) and Co-founder/Chief Reputation Strategist, Upticomm Marketing Company - a public relations consultancy in Lagos.

He has over 20 years cognate experience in selling, journalism, publishing, public relations, advertising, branding, digital media, public and consumer affairs and manpower development consulting. Olusegun is passionate about helping individuals, companies and brands maximize their full potential.

Listed among the 50 Most Influential Marketing Communications Practitioners in Nigeria, Olusegun is the Chairman/CE of the Lagos State Chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations





**DIGITAL MEDIA AND PR:
THE PATH TO GROWTH FOR
AGENCIES IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL**

BY MOLIEHI MOLEKOA - MAGNA CARTA SOUTH AFRICA

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) portends a fantastic new world with self-driving vehicles, drones that do door to door deliveries, augmented reality, voice-operated home devices, virtual assistance and several other technological conveniences. It is an ideal world where human beings sit back as machines slave for us, doing tedious tasks that no one really enjoys doing.

In communications, artificial intelligence is already doing tasks that were previously exclusively done by highly skilled professionals. In 2019 the New York Times reported that almost a third of content published by Bloomberg News, the international wire service, was produced using AI.

Today, we use social media listening tools to track conversations on Twitter, search

engines select stories for us based on our interest, artificial intelligence filters adverts that people see according to their online behaviour and even suggest 'influencers' to follow on social media.

Adapting to this world requires communications professionals to do more than just revising their catalogue of services or 'redefining' the role of communications.

Rather, what we need is an even sharper focus on the core business of communications, a return to the first principles. In a world saturated by information, and where tools of communications are accessible to one and all, the question is what our unique role as communications experts is.

Communication has always been about inspiring different actors to undertake concerted action towards achieving a common goal. 4IR does not change the essence of what we do; it merely gives us more tools. Today, there are at least three clear roles for communications professionals that remain unchanged:

1. Helping clients to nurture a community of shared interest. Communication today should help companies not only build brand recognition, but also brand trust. Communications professionals should help companies foster a community of interests – stakeholders that are brought together by a common understanding that a client's success is tied to theirs. Building a community of shared interests future-proofs clients from reputation shocks of a highly connected world, where individuals have unprecedented power to build or destroy company brands.

2. Helping clients define shared value. Companies do not only sell products and services. They bring to the market solutions

that help others achieve their own goals.

The role of communications is to help companies define and foster a common understanding of shared value among multiple role players in a client's success. For example, a motorcycle manufacturer is not only creating a product to sell, they are also creating a transport solution. The role of the communications professional is to help such a client to articulate the shared value that their motorbike creates for students going to school, entrepreneurs trying to get their products to the market and for city managers.

3. Helping clients' shared purpose. Communications should help companies to create a shared purpose among stakeholders. A shared purpose creates a basis for companies to mobilise disparate stakeholders to act in a concerted way to unlock value for itself, and for all stakeholders. It is what gives a client the grounds to ask others to take a specific action.

Technological changes do not change the essential value of communications. It provides more tools for unlocking this value. Our responsibility to clients remains the same – helping them build communities of shared interest, helping them articulate shared value, and helping them mobilise concerted action among stakeholders in support of their strategic objectives. Mastering the brave new communications world that technology ushers is merely housekeeping.

ABOUT MOLIEHI MOLEKOA

Moliehi has over 18 years' experience in the communications industry, having worked across the spectrum of PR for both public and private sector clients across the continent. She has a mix of skills including strategy development, reputation and crisis management, client service management, media relations and stakeholder management. She's the Managing Director of Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants, one of South Africa's leading reputation management consultancies with an exciting 25-year history of working with South Africa's and Africa's top brands in the corporate, government and consumer sectors. In South Africa, Magna Carta has offices in Johannesburg and Cape Town and has an African network that spans 18 countries on the continent.



At the time, I had a little over seven thousand followers on twitter and another five thousand friends on Facebook which made me wonder what posting on my pages was ever going to do for them. The money was good though and the experience promised an opportunity to learn some new things so I obviously wasn't going to question their rationale or reject the offer.

I took the job, got mobilized and delivered what was required of me over the course of the campaign. One of my deliverables was to post my experiences using the product a certain number of times per week. I simply told what I considered a regular story of me using the product. Turns out, as I would later discover, that this particular type of endorsement is exactly why influencer marketing proves very powerful and effective.

My initial surprise was chiefly driven by ignorance I must admit now because I naively viewed the strategies or tools needed to deliver an effective campaign through the lens of my traditional marketing practice and clearly underestimated the evolution that was gradually taking place within the marketing landscape. I worked as a copywriter in one of Nigeria's top creative agencies at the time so you could say I was a carpenter who looked at every challenge like a nail that needed a hammer solution.

In hindsight though, I have nothing but respect, admiration and praise for the brands that saw into the future, recognized the immense power of this 'new way' and started prioritizing the use of social media influencers as a key part or as the core of their PR strategies.

Permit me at this juncture to clarify for the avoidance of doubt, that this article does not attempt to conclude that traditional

WHY BRANDS MUST INCLUDE INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THEIR PR STRATEGY

BY BADA AKINTUNDE-JOHNSON - VIACOMCBS NETWORKS AFRICA

I remember receiving a brief in 2010 from a PR agency asking me to work on a campaign as a social media influencer for one of the biggest non-alcoholic beverage brands in Nigeria ahead of the 2010 FIFA world cup in South Africa. I wondered why such a huge brand needed me and the rest of the guys they hired for the same purpose at the time.

Clearly, with their seemingly limitless budgets, they could afford to buy millions of advertising spots on major television and radio networks or sign superstar celebrity brand ambassadors to guarantee the audience reach they wanted for their campaign.



Figure 1: Comparison of Influencer marketing and print advertising between December 2016 and June 2018

marketing methods no longer work. Rather, my position is that marketing campaigns, especially in this part of the world, will work even more effectively when traditional methods are combined with influencer marketing. After all, a campaign is said to be effective only to the degree of its integration of multiple tactics fit for different platforms or audiences. I'm sure we all remember the marketing mix from our early introduction to the study of marketing and promotions.

In the last 5 years, brands have collaborated extensively with influencers on campaigns thereby growing what used to be nothing more than an ancillary marketing tactic to an estimated 10-billion-dollar a year industry. The question then is: why has influencer marketing become so important universally over the years? Why is it important to have social media influencers form a big part of the strategy for any PR campaign? The table below shows clearly the top objectives that brands achieve by using influencers in campaigns. I'll like to touch on the top five based on the rankings in Figure 2 below, which I believe reflect global trends as well as reinforce my experiences and learnings within the marketing and PR spaces locally.

DRIVE BRAND AWARENESS AND IMPROVE ADVOCACY:

Influencer marketing can create more awareness for brands and for much lesser budgets than traditional marketing. In a recent survey, out of 81% of marketers who use influencer content, 51% of them said

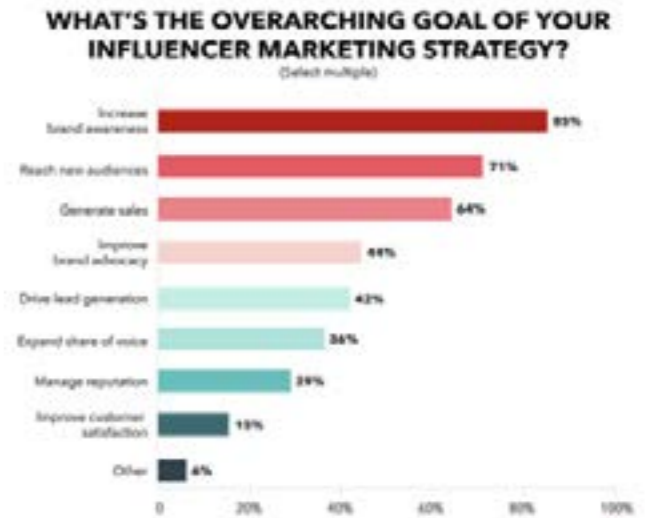


Figure 2: Bar chart showing common goals of the influencer marketing strategy

that it outperforms brand created content.

The reason is easy to see. Influencer marketing is a modern adaptation of word-of-mouth which has been an effective marketing strategy for as long as human societies have existed. Influencers typically enjoy very loyal if not almost religious or cult following.

These followers perceive them as authorities in the areas of their interest or expertise. This makes it easy for them to confer their credibility on the brand. Add the rapport they already cultivated with these audiences and you see why they can help build an army of brand believers, evangelists and promoters.

It is very organic, authentic and guarantees better engagement that humanizes the brand and makes it more relatable and lovable over time too.

SALES AND LEAD GENERATION:

Traditional marketing has always struggled to convince that it can deliver conversion. It does a great deal for the top of mind awareness but not so much for 'making the cash register ring' as the legendary David Ogilvy would say. Not so with influencer marketing.

This is because there are measurement metrics, which clearly help with tracking

results. Brand mentions, click-through rates, referral traffic, custom links, downloads, subscriptions, redemption codes, landing pages among others help to drive tangible and measurable sales. To add to that, a brand using influencers has access to critical personal information or data that can prove very useful in direct marketing through newsletter subscriptions and account setups.

The best measurements, to me, are the ones that allow you to use metrics that tally directly with the campaign objective. Sales metrics for sales objectives and awareness metrics for awareness-based campaigns. Influencer marketing does deliver great ROI, without a doubt. According to a Tomson study, businesses earn \$6.50 for each dollar spent on influencers with the top 13% earning \$20 or even more on each dollar spent. Those are definitely super impressive numbers and I would like to believe the Nigerian picture isn't much different, if different at all.

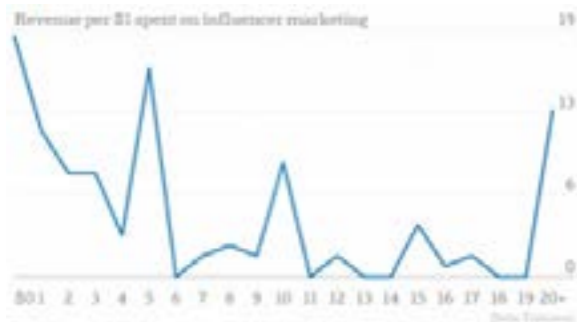


Figure 3: Tomson study on revenue per \$1 spent by businesses on influencer marketing

REACH NEW AUDIENCES:

Reaching audiences or the right ones is becoming more and more difficult for traditional marketing. In more developed climes, like in the US, ad blocking usage is 40% on laptops and 15% on mobile - as audiences show more and more irritation for pop-ups and banners. It is common knowledge that during ad breaks on radio and television, people pick up their

mobile phones, go use the bathroom and do other things till their favourite shows come back on. With influencer marketing, brands beat these challenges quite easily and can even extend their campaign messages to audiences who otherwise wouldn't have paid it any attention whatsoever or seen it.

Influencers have access to and can share with brands key audience data like age, location, gender and interests, which help to make targeting a lot more focused and impactful. Want your campaign to hit the bull's eye target audience or reach new audiences? Influencer marketing provides a reliable way to target more accurately.

My experiences working with some of the biggest brands clearly show that there is still a lot of scepticism about the effectiveness of influencer marketing in this market. Much as it has been used in Nigeria for some time now, compared to the rest of the developed and to a certain degree, other developing nations, we are still very much at the embryo stages.

There are many brands that still only employ the 'safe' traditional options, which clearly are less measurable and less effective in isolation.

Now as head of a multi-brand multinational media business in the market, I consider any campaign plan delivered to me without an influencer marketing component incomplete. Maybe someday in the future when the numbers no longer add up, my opinion will adjust to the reality of then.

For now, the numbers do add up. They certainly do and many brands have been taking advantage of this for years now. Time for yours to join this group of companies maybe?

ABOUT BADA AKINTUNDE JOHNSON

With over 14 years of media, creative and marketing experience, Bada Akintunde-Johnson is Country Manager (Nigeria) for VIACOMCBS. Bada's role is to run the entire scope of Viacom's Markets overseeing brands such as MTV, MTVBase, Nickelodeon, Comedy central, BET and MTV Shuga.



Rather, my position is that marketing campaigns, especially in this part of the world, will work even more effectively when traditional methods are combined with influencer marketing.



only understand the 'Communications' aspect of Integrated Marketing Communications which is only a part of 'Promotions', which in turn is only a fourth of the '4 Ps' from classical Marketing Mix theory.

Communications alone is never enough.

Now, it is almost impossible for the I-only-know-communications type of PR person to thrive in the era we are in. More than ever before, there is now a greater need for integration across various marketing disciplines and functions.

Moreso, we are in an era where organisations (the clients) are looking more for expert advisors, solution providers and competent consultants who will deliver on business objectives and help them succeed in various areas of brand building.

Clients need more than just an 'agency' to offer tactical activities and the era of advertising-only, PR-only, events production-only, research-only, media buying-only and digital-only service providers is long gone.

This has been a growing trend for a good number of years, and young talents in PR today that are not actively working to develop general marketing capabilities are doing themselves a disservice.

For individuals working in any of these specialist marketing/communications agencies, being renowned as a well-rounded Marketing Professional, rather than just a 'PR Professional' for example, is a more sure way to becoming indispensable to clients' businesses beyond just comms.

Further evidence of this shift can be seen in the evolution of the suite of services offered by traditional consulting companies like Accenture, BCG, McKinsey and co, who are

WHY PR PROFESSIONALS MUST BECOME MARKETING GENERALISTS

BY FEMI FALODUN - ID AFRICA

I've spent the last seven years working closely with Public Relations professionals and marketing-communications people across various disciplines.

From young ones fresh out of school, to experienced ones who hold mid-level positions, to seasoned vets who have founded successful practices or lead corporate and brand communications at large corporations.

One thing I've found particularly common amongst many PR folks, from entry-level to mid-management level, is the general lack of understanding or appreciation for what Marketing really is. Or to be more specific, where PR fits in within the broader Marketing Mix.

It is not enough for a PR person to

slowly but surely creeping in to take food from the plates of traditional marketing communications agencies, including those offering primarily PR services.

PR IS GREAT, BUT THE CLIENT NEEDS MORE

And the reason for this is simple, Brand Managers and their bosses' bosses are looking for one-stop shops where all their marketing needs can be met. And this is true now more than ever in the industry.

Why send six RFPs: for creative, PR, digital, research, media, events, etc, when you can find two very strong marketing or business consulting firms with a building-full of well-rounded Marketers, strategists and creatives, who can manage a brand's needs from A to Z and deliver results? It's a no brainer, really.

For PR, it's not like the practice itself is dying. No, far from it. It's just that a new breed of smart business consultants are taking on big-budget PR briefs from brand marketers and executives, leaving the traditional PR agencies scrambling for crumbs and leftovers.

It has thus become extremely important for PR people to focus on becoming more of Marketing Generalists than PR or Comms specialists.

Generalists are people who have a variety of experience and expertise. They can connect dots where others don't see a link.

IF A PR PRO ISN'T A MARKETER, THEN WHO IS?

Let's do a quick refresher on what Marketing really is.

Marketing, according to the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) UK, is "a management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably."

In other words, a Marketer is someone who can help manage the process of identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers in a manner that is profitable to the organisation.

If your understanding of your work does not match this, then maybe you are NOT a marketer.

Let's take a look at the original Marketing Mix elements which define the various tactical options available to marketers:

- **Product:** the thing of value that was created for customers' satisfaction
- **Place:** the channels and routes through which the product meets the customer
- **Price:** the agreed value placed on a product / the utility derived from the product by a customer
- **Promotion:** the 'story' we tell to convince the customer of the value of the thing we created

You will notice that 'customer' is at the heart of the definition of every P!

Sadly, for many practising PR people, especially younger talents, only one of the 4 Ps is understood, i.e. Promotions.

And even within that 'Promotions' space, many still shy away from embracing the full IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications) spectrum, which goes beyond mere Advertising or PR or Events, but constitutes a smart blend and integration of various marketing-communications disciplines, including research which should be at the heart of every decision-making process in marketing.

BE A PR PRO, BUT NOT 'ONE-FOURTH OF A MARKETER'

Being a PR and/or an advertising specialist alone still leaves you with 3 whole Ps short, making you only one-fourth of a Marketer. And ignoring the other 3 Ps means you can only understand and have the capacity to solve only one-fourth of your client's overall

marketing needs. So, where does that leave you in today's age of consolidation?

As PR people, we need to ask ourselves: What do I know about product development and product management?

What do I know about pricing and the science behind customer's responses to price?

What do I know about distribution and channels and the customer journey?

How can we sit down with, and intelligently advise a client who has broad training and experience in Brand Management and Marketing, if we only know a quarter of what her job is about? This is exactly where the problem lies for most PR people today.

We do not know enough about Marketing to effectively support the objectives and

goals of the clients of this day and age. I am convinced that it is easy for every great marketer to understand, practise, or appreciate good PR. But it is not every great PR person that can automatically understand, practise or appreciate good marketing, until they get requisite training in the core principles and theories of modern Marketing.

This is the problem we need to fix so that individual PR practitioners and consulting firms can make themselves more useful and indispensable to the Brand Managers and CMOs and CEOs that sign the cheques we so desperately seek.

PR is only a subset, of a subset of Marketing, and a lack of understanding for, or appreciation of the full scope of the Marketing practice will leave a PR professional ill-equipped to deal with the complex needs of today's global brands.

ABOUT FEMI FALODUN

Femi Falodun is a Nigerian marketing and communications professional. In 2017, he was appointed Chief Operating Officer, COO of ID Africa and in 2019, he was named Chief Executive Officer, CEO of the company after it acquired NET News Limited and all its subsidiaries. Falodun is recognised as one of the young Nigerians pioneering the use of technology in marketing and communications. In 2016, Falodun was honored by Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) with a Digital PR Ambassadorship Certification.



INFLUENCER MARKETING AND THE TRENDS SHAPING A POST-COVID19 FUTURE
 BY GBENGA SOGBAIKE - PLAQAD

After many years of marketing, content is still king, its gatekeepers are now well aware of the power they wield, and a virus will do little to stop them now.

One of the many reasons people berate millennials is the short attention span that various researches, including those from Harvard and Forbes, have attributed to them. But in many ways than one, this poor attention trait seems to be no direct problem of theirs, but a consequence of the number of stories that exist today.

Social media has made this the era of stories, serving them in quick, simple and different engaging formats.

In most stories of succession, people talk more about the king and the kingmakers;

the people who decide who becomes what, but less about those who grant the access.

In today's marketing succession stories though, the gatekeepers are getting more vocal, even just as loud as the kings. Those gatekeepers are the influencers.

With the advent of social media marketing, more people got introduced to a different kind of celebrity followership, one not necessarily built on a unique skill such as Michael Jordan's air moves but on the simple ability to connect with people and engage them.

Today, influencer marketing is a \$9billion plus marketing industry that owes its foundation and success to this phenomenon of connection and engagement. As public relations consultant Stephen Waddington puts it, "it can be anyone with their own network or media."

Brands trust these new celebrities to get them in front of those busy audiences that they as brands can't seem to reach, and get these users to choose them over the competition because they trust their word.

As platform statistics from Twitter show, about 40% of consumers rely on influencer recommendations for purchases, and sometimes, all it takes is one tweet.

At a time like this when consumers are going through a rough patch due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people who have noted drastic changes in consumer behaviour and how brands are tweaking their marketing spend, are wondering what that holds for the now powerful influencer marketing tool.

Before the pandemic, research showed that

brands that spent on influencer campaigns made back their money five times over, i.e more than \$5 for each \$1 spent.

Brands also increased online advertising spend over more traditional means of advertising, with influencer marketing alone getting more spend than print advertising, and earning its spot as the most cost-effective and fastest method of obtaining new customers.

In addition, Forbes reported that global spending on influencer marketing in 2017 was at an estimated \$2billion. By 2019, the report stated that it rose to about \$8billion and projected that it would jump to \$15billion by 2022.

The big question has become whether 2020's pandemic will hamper that growth? Simple answer, no. Here are some trends that prove that.

The first thing every marketer has realized now is that there is no normal for consumers to go back to. Whatever behavioural changes they have adopted now won't rapidly change.

Already, a survey by Kantar showed a 61% increase in social media usage during this time, with PR agency Tin Man reporting a 50% increase in the last week of April alone.

What this means is that more users are online, connecting and engaging with content from influencers. This has made way for two trends that will continue even after the pandemic. The first is an increase in engagement given the larger audience online.

The other trend is the emergence of more influencers, mostly on platforms such as TikTok, which has proven to be a favourite for most young users, with 41% of TikTok's 800 million active users aged between 16

and 24.

With this growing engagement for influencers, we will notice more brands fully embracing influencer marketing as they try to reach their audiences, the bulk of whom are now online - shopping, sharing their work, daily routines, cooking or keeping up with family and friends. While this might lead to rate card increases for influencers, it is bound to get more brands in front of their audiences via various digital channels.

A key trend we can expect will be that of brands seeking deeper relationships with influencers now and after. These solid relationships with influencers during this time will win influencer loyalty and bring even more benefits after the pandemic.



One other trend that will be key for brands will be the adoption of influencer marketing platforms. We live in the era of one-stop shops, and for many brands who aren't used to influencer marketing, platforms such as Plaquad will ensure they can adapt easily.

A platform like Plaquad helps brands easily build and manage relationships with influencers. With the opportunity to automate the process of discovery, campaign management, tracking and

measurement, and payment for influencer campaigns, it will be a no-brainer for brands seeking efficiency.

2019 numbers show that 57% of the beauty and fashion industry remains highly engaged in influencer marketing, but as most luxury goods companies, just like those in travel, hospitality and events got hit hard by the pandemic, a number of the influencers in those spaces have had to pivot to other niches.

Post-COVID-19, we expect to see some of them stay in their new niches and grow a fresh following, while some will return to these affected industries to help brands regain the trust of their consumers.

There is no denying that the number of micro-influencers has grown within this period. Even before now, they were all around and were brand favourites as well. PR Daily states that "77% of micro-influencers create content every day, and 84% of micro-influencers recommend products or services at least once every week, with 99% saying they believe in what they promote."

We definitely should expect more of them, especially in areas such as personal care, cooking, morning routines, wellness, finance, DIY, philanthropy, food delivery, online shopping, virtual classrooms, digital wallets etc. These are all areas that have received attention at this time.

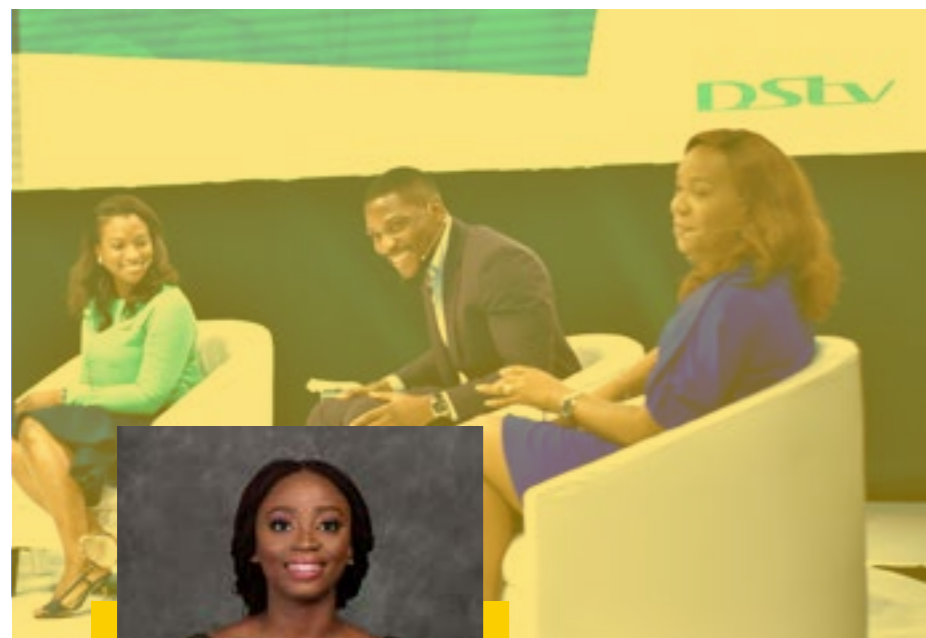
When we think of a post-COVID-19 influencer marketing world, we must remember that this pandemic has only amplified what was already there and won't stop now. Virtual events, Instagram Live sessions, all seem to have popped up from the blue, but they were always there. Post-COVID, there will be no normal to go back to, this is the new normal and the gatekeepers will run the show.

Today, influencer marketing is a \$9billion plus marketing industry that owes its foundation and success to this phenomenon of connection and engagement.



ABOUT GBENGA SOGBAIKE

Gbenga Sogbaike is a Nigerian tech entrepreneur and CEO of Plaquad. In 2019, he was named one of the 100 young African tech entrepreneurs by The Future Project, (organizers of Future Awards, and the #YTech100).



If you make a success of keeping clients, you build deep connections, successful and mutually beneficial partnerships that withstand time, economic instabilities, possible issues and even distance.

But before a client decides to sign on with you or your agency, a connection must be made. It could be intellectual, emotional or as a result of your past achievements.

Whatever it is, you have to maintain that momentum and here are some quick ways to do just that.

1. Do great work

Simple right? Well, that's the thing. While this seems like an obvious thing to do, most agencies get comfortable when they have gotten "the client". Caution is thrown to the wind and it is generally believed that because they chose you and are bound by a contract, they are going nowhere.

Well, that is false, because every client is on the lookout for something better and if they have the best with you, they most likely will be satisfied. How do you give them the best? By putting in your very best, literally! For my team and I, every brief, every email and every task is treated like a pitch. Every activity must be treated with the same level of attention to detail, as the first. A client-agency relationship is a never-ending test. Don't be tricked to think you have won just because you bagged the client.

2. Provide support

You might be wondering what support means for a client that is a profitable start-up, SME or multinational. But as PR practitioners, we are consultants and industry experts. If your clients can do your job, they won't need you.

The only way to prove useful is to provide

10 BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS EFFECTIVELY

BY ENITAN KEHINDE - BHM

According to the 2019 Holmes Report, the global PR industry grew by 5% in the last year. For most agencies, this growth stems from the number of clients and businesses secured and engaged.

While client acquisition is important to an agency, client retention is even more paramount.

Getting new clients is a big deal, but keeping them and maintaining the relationship can prove just as challenging. Relationships are the bedrock for thriving businesses.

Building successful working relationships requires a lot of effort; a skilled team, the right investments and attention to details, especially for agencies with multiple clients.

that support and serve an advisory role. Do not be a yes man. Be the backbone for your client.

For some clients, this might be difficult, but proving your worth overtime and establishing boundaries will go a long way to providing your clients with the right kind of support.

3. Be Human

Sending emails and typing up documents might sometimes have us forgetting that the recipient is human. Besides the salutations and regards, how are you getting to know the individuals you are dealing with?

Yes, this is part of the job.

Always make sure to build a healthy rapport with all your clients. Knowing what they like, what is important to them, their birthdays and their interests and keying into them is important. It shows effort and will help you find common ground, outside of the work you share. It also gets you good graces for when you get into little troubles!

4. Take a proactive approach

Asides playing an advisory role, you also have to enforce anticipatory guidance. PR as a profession in itself is not reactionary. It is planned, maintained and sustained. There is no reason why your work should be passive and almost retroactive.

Being two steps ahead and planning well into the future shows your clients that you value them and are working hand in hand with them to build their brands.

5. Value Your Client's Opinion

Being a subject matter expert, or a consultant, does not mean you have to come off as condescending or disregarding of your clients' opinions. They understand the brands and the business environment.

So while you communicate your stance on various issues and tasks, always value your clients' opinions and understand them. If they negate yours, help them see reason

and value in what you are presenting to them. You are on the same side and should never have to come to blows over anything.

6. Transparency No Matter the Consequences

It is very important to build trust in every relationship. One of the quickest and most efficient ways to do so is by being transparent. There is no need to lie or cover up with your clients because you are on the same side.

This is one key element we prioritize at BHM. We always make sure to be as clear and transparent with our clients as possible. Secrets and lies kill relationships. No matter how careful you are, you just might slip and get caught. And at the end of the day, nothing is ever worth dishonesty.

- A task can not be done as promised? Communicate!
- Your plans and back up plans fell through? Communicate!
- You're having issues with a certain task and you know your client can be of help? Communicate!

It shows a certain level of responsibility and vulnerability when you can both work together to achieve the set goals, instead of being dishonest and appearing as incompetent when the plans fall through.



So while you communicate your stance on various issues and tasks, always value your clients' opinions and understand them. If they negate yours, help them see reason and value in what you are presenting to them.

7. Promise Within Reason and Overdeliver

A lot of people like to say, “Underpromise and Overdeliver”, but I like to go with “Promise Within Reason”.

Why?

Underpromising means shortchanging your clients. Clients like to know and see that you are doing your possible best to get the job done.

It is very easy to promise your clients heaven and earth when you are trying to win their business. But then all your promises fall on empty when it is time to actually do the job. In dealing with clients, it is best to be clear on all terms and deliverables with a back knowledge that you can overdeliver on them.

8. Set Measurable Goals and Objectives

Although pre-agreed terms and deliverables were mentioned in the previous point, it is important to note that setting and agreeing on measurable goals and objectives will help both parties evaluate the relationship after a set period.

It also helps to keep you on your toes so you do not drop any balls. Not only does it do this but it insulates you and your agency from any unwarranted expectations from the client.

9. Don't Be Petty! Don't Burn Bridges

Dealing with clients can be difficult. You are bound to butt heads, have disagreements and even meltdowns. Trust me I know. But like any relationship, the way these issues are managed can either make or mar that relationship. In my many disputes with colleagues and clients, I have learnt to not be overly emotional but to approach each situation with love and logic. Sounds cliché right? Well, there is nothing a little love and understanding can't fix. Do not, in a bid to prove a point, be petty and ruin an otherwise beneficial relationship with your client.

In cases, where the relationship has to, unfortunately, come to an end, do not burn any bridges. Do not make the situation so bad that the client or individuals involved cannot come back to you for future briefs and business opportunities.

10. Finally, Treat Every Client Like Your First and Last

Treat every client like they're your very first and your very last. There is this thing about respect, especially in Nigeria. Every Nigerian (though some may deny), likes to be placed on a pedestal and clients are not left out.

Swift responses, regular check-ins, returned missed calls, and all-round impeccable service, regardless of the size of the account will lead to gratified and happy clients.

Little things like always being early and offering to help, go a long way.

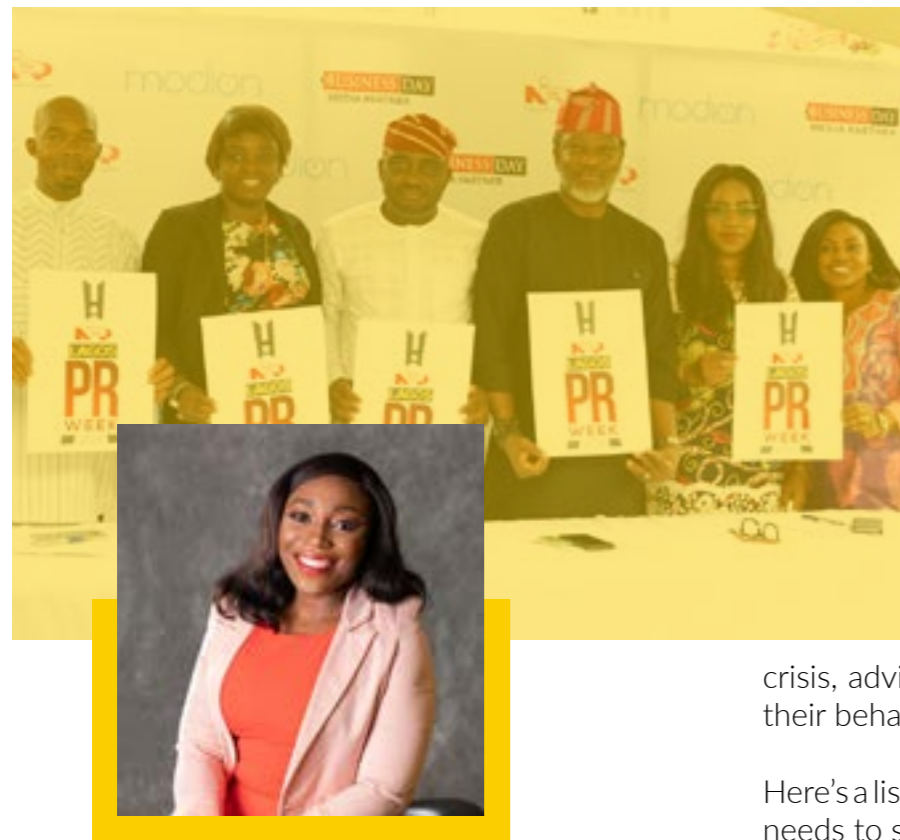
It is important to note that to take your consultancy to the next level, you have to prioritize client relationships. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions. It might seem like a lot, but the eventual payoff is huge.

Remember, happy clients mean referrals and top of mind for the agency on future briefs and Businesses.



ABOUT ENITAN KEHINDE

Enitan Kehinde is a Lead Consultant at BHM. She leads day-to-day account management and client interfacing for clients like Nigerian Breweries Plc. and Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited. With undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Mass Communication and Public Relations, Enitan is a skilled marketing communications professional with over five years of experience, working in the PR industry.



20 BEST TOOLS FOR EVERY PR PROFESSIONAL
 BY PRECIOUS NWACHUKWU - BHM

In considering the best tools for a PR Professional, it is important to identify niche areas of public relations practice as well as other factors that determine their choice of tools. Top on the list is the side of the divide where the professional works; either on the agency or the client-side. Second is the size of the organisation; a small, medium or a large corporation.

In addition, we also need to identify the PR vehicle that the professional uses to achieve their objective. As is the practice with other professions, there are PR specialists and generalists.

Key PR Channels include:

1. Media Relations
2. Business/media events
3. Speaking engagements
4. Content generation

5. Community relations
6. Social media

The PR channels above are by no means exhaustive; however, they give a good basis for identifying some of the best tools a PR professional needs.

For a PR Consultant on the agency side, COVID-19 isn't a reduction in your work activities, rather, this period requires identifying more opportunities for your client to stay relevant amidst the

crisis, advising the client and executing on their behalf.

Here's a list of 20 best tools a PR professional needs to successfully practise in Nigeria.

Directory: the basics of public relations practice is knowing the key journalists in the sector you serve/represent as well as the days of the week they publish their stories. Storing their name and contact details on your phone isn't enough and you need to have a working database of journalists that cover key sectors in mainstream media, their positions etc. For me, the best tool for this is the good old excel sheet.

Most PR pros require a distribution tool to get their news stories out in the media. While the **email** is the first and most well-known tool for content distribution, there are other equally important tools that can enhance content distribution. Introducing **mailtrack.io**, a free Chrome extension that lets you know if your email has been delivered or opened. That way you can follow up with journalists who are yet to open your mail effectively.

Social media has proven to be another effective content distribution tool as PR pros can send news stories to journalists through the **direct message** option on all the platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

For media monitoring and online reputation management, there are a plethora of tools out there most of which are paid for but at the basics, **Google and Talkwalker alerts** are a PR pro's best media monitoring buddies. You can set up keywords that are not just relevant to your brand but also for your competition and it is important to see the stories as they happen.

Listening tools allow you to find out what is being said about your brand and enables you to respond to the customers' concerns in a timely manner, a personal favourite is **Hootsuite**. It allows you to set up multiple tabs around various keywords and you are able to see what customers are saying about that keyword in real-time.

Another important tool for every PR pro is a sentiment analysis tool as it is important to know how customers feel about your client or brands' activities. Beyond knowing how customers feel, it is also important to feel the pulse of the media as they are a gatekeeper to your target audience and will shape the audience' perception of your brand.

Sentiment analysis tools are sometimes embedded in most media measuring tools such as Plaqaad,

Meltwater and Cision or you can try a stand-alone sentiment analysis tool such as **Brandseye**.

Website analysis tools are essential in a PR PRO's arsenal in order to determine the effectiveness and reach of your brand mention on a particular platform in

comparison to another. **Similar Web** is equally effective and shows you a website's average performance in terms of visits and hit.

Another important tool is for auditing your social media follower count. Studies have shown that up to 40% of web traffic come from bot activity. Hence, it is important to check your brand's social media following periodically and clean out inactive accounts who serve to bloat the brand's follower counts but does not reflect in the engagement rates. A tool I'll recommend for this is **Followers** for Instagram.

Content creation is an important aspect of PR. I believe every PR pro needs to have one content creation tool or two in their kit. First on my list is **Coschedule's** headline analyser. As a PR Pro, your headline can make or mar your news story. The headline analyser reviews your headline suggestion and gives tips on how to improve it. The best part about it is that it's free.

Another important content creation tool is **Subject Line**, it helps to review your email subject based on clickability and how attractive it looks to a reader.

Still, on content creation, another important tool is **Grammarly**. It analyses written **content** based on structure, spelling, punctuation, engagement and others to ensure the content is original and free of mistakes.

The plagiarism feature looks through millions of websites and academic journals to verify if your content has previously appeared elsewhere.

For a PR Consultant on the agency side, COVID-19 isn't a reduction in your work activities, rather, this period requires identifying more opportunities for your client to stay relevant amidst the crisis, advising the client and executing on their behalf.

Canva is an online design tool that offers free templates for turning your content into powerful visuals for use across multiple digital platforms. **Unsplash and Pexels** also offer free stock images. Unsplash is a personal favourite and all that is required is to credit the

photographer while using the images.

Shutterstock, although paid for, offers a diverse array of premium stock content from images to vectors, videos, illustration as well as music.

If you manage a team other than yourself, you should consider getting a project management tool such as **Trello**. It allows you to manage projects among your team by assigning teammates, setting deadlines, attaching files and integrating checklists to keep track of different steps of a project. You should try it.

For measuring and analysing campaign performance, I will recommend **Plaqaad, Meltwater or Cision**. With these tools, one is able to see the platforms that published your stories, analyse the reach, sentiments, number of views and the PR value of the platforms.

Coverage Book combines all your results from a campaign and automatically calculates metrics such as website visits, social shares, domain authority, etc. to

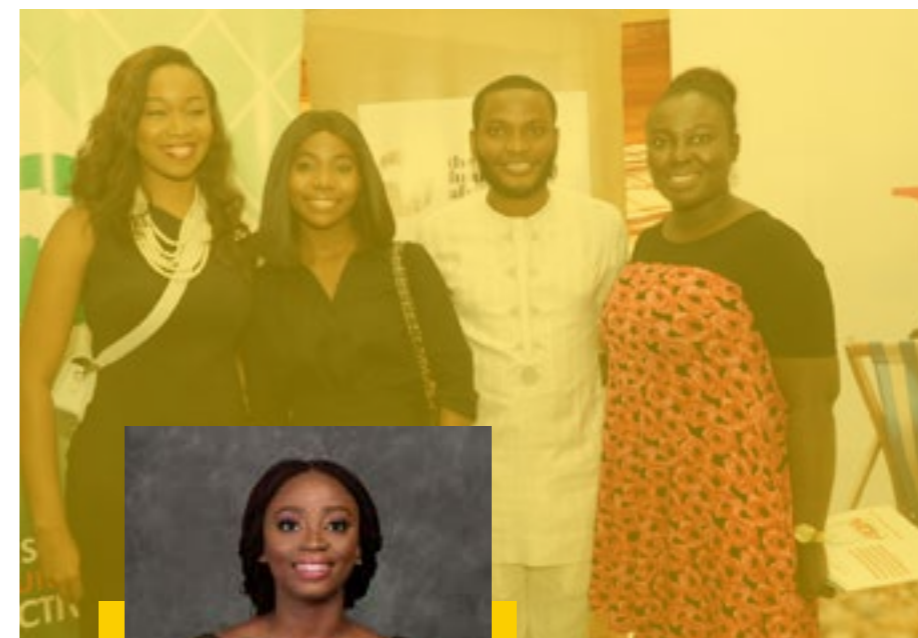
show a campaign's effectiveness. It's the perfect tool for dazzling your client.

Last but not the least, is the influencer outreach tool. As influencer marketing becomes increasingly sought after by clients and is fast replacing traditional forms of marketing, every PR pro needs to keep tabs on the key influencers in the segments they serve.

Plaqaad helps identify and manage influencer campaigns from start to finish. I have worked with their community of young and influential ambassadors for various campaigns and will do it again.

ABOUT PRECIOUS NWACHUKWU

Precious Nwachukwu is a Lead Consultant at BHM Group and team lead on the MTN team. She is a graduate of Marine Biology from the University of Lagos and holds a higher level certification in Strategic Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK (CIM). Prior to joining BHM, Precious worked in-house on Corporate Communication teams for leading financial services and ICT brands such as Sterling Bank and Helios Towers among others.



THE SCIENCE OF LIVE VIDEOS AND THE ART OF GETTING IT RIGHT

BY ENITAN KEHINDE - BHM

Watching Andrea Bocelli live, on Sunday, April 12, 2020, was so surreal!

But what made it even more special was watching it with my grandpa!

You see, my 80-year-old grandfather is the absolute king of swank and growing up around him, I fell in love with some of what have now become my favourite things ... red wine, croissants, cheese platters, jazz and of course the opera, so it was a blessing sharing the live concert with him.

My colleague shared the link to the concert with me and I hurriedly sent it to my grandpa. It was a wonderful experience to share in our love for Andrea Bocelli's music even though we were miles apart.

And that's the reality of the world today.

Now more than ever, the world is turning to technology to stay connected. This is as a result of the global pandemic which has forced human beings across the world to keep their distance from one another.

And with features like calls, videos, photos, games and of course, live streams, things like social distancing are now a breeze.

Live videos have especially become very popular but the phenomenon didn't start today.

With platforms like Livestream (launched in 2007) and YouTube Live (launched in 2008) who first introduced us to the world of live videos online and Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Periscope, LinkedIn and others introducing the Live feature to their apps, the successful element has come to stay.

In Andrea Bocelli's case, Italy has had over 155,000 confirmed cases and almost 20,000 deaths, and the world-renowned opera singer used a live video to bring people together, spreading the message of hope. Hosted on YouTube, the Live video had 2.8 million peak concurrent viewers, according to YouTube and yielded over 26million views in less than 24 hours.

Where the message has been to cure boredom and engage with fans, musicians like Tory Lanez and FalzTheBahdGuy have proven that Live really does work. Tory, for example, has broken Instagram Live records, reaching over 350,000 views, at a time, and even launching merchandise for his Instagram Live-based show, Quarantine Radio. For these celebrities, Live videos have become a platform to engage with fans, showcase their art and bring people together for the fun of it.

Beyond pop-culture, one of my favourite pastors, Pastor Poju Oyemade, about two weeks ago, started a live series. One of the sessions with Reverend Sam Adeyemi, which focused on leadership, the pandemic and the state of the country, recorded thousands of views.

But why are brands not getting it right?

Why are brands not getting as many eyeballs as the pop-culture and faith-based “influencers”?

I have found myself joining a number of live videos initiated by brands, and even with the presence of a brand ambassador, celebrity, artist or DJ, the numbers were not impressive.

What could be the reason for this?

To find the answers, we have to dig deep into the reason why Live videos are successful in the first place:

- **Spontaneity:** I mistakenly stumbled on one of Nigerian Instagram comedian, Father DMW (Muhammadu Abdulai) and London-based Ugandan model, Eva Apio’s live videos and I found it to be hilarious, very off-the-cuff and easy. What started off as a random live talent show hosted by Eva has yielded as much as 50,000 views, at a time, with Nigerian celebrities like Alex Iwobi, Don Jazzy, Ebuka and Adekunle Gold, tuned in.
- **Planned but not stiff:** Planned videos can also be fun and that is where trends like the “Battle of Hits” hosted by top music producers across the world, falls. In Nigeria for example, when music producers, Shizzi and Sarz had their “Battle of Hits” Live video, it got as much as 25,000 views, at a time. The trend is based on two things young people love good music and nostalgia. Which leads me to my next point:
- **That Edge:** What’s that edge your live video has? Is it just another concert? Another training session? Another platform



to have your influencers and ambassadors look like they were forced to be there? Or is it a video with an edge hinged on your target audience’s interests?

- **Engage with the audience:** When I watched FalzTheBahdGuy’s “Ask Me Anything” Live video, I was hooked. I sat through what didn’t feel like at least four hours and shared the video with everyone who cared to watch. Why? Because Falz got us all involved. Even his family joined in. Successful Instagram videos like his, which had as much as 20,000 views, at a time, saw Falz speak with multiple fans. The live video had Falz interact with numerous fans giving them a chance to get to know him better, breaking the celebrity facade.
- **Bringing Diverse People Together:** At least that’s what Diddy did with Team Love Dance-A-Thon, and exactly what Global Citizen will do on April 18, 2020, with its “Together At Home” Concert. Diddy brought creatives from across the world, like LeBron James, Jennifer Lopez, Alex Rodriguez, Drake, Justin Bieber, Lizzo, Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy to discuss the effect of the epidemic on their vicinity, their art and his new show. Tagged The Team Love Dance-A-Thon, the show was put together to celebrate health workers in the forefront fighting the global pandemic Coronavirus.
- **Branding = Repellant:** From the trends over the past few weeks, it is quite

obvious that branding repels views. It’s almost like a turn-off. I have joined a number of overbranded live videos and I’ve cringed at the numbers. And this is exactly where our brands get it wrong. As brand managers, we always want to brand everything and heavily too. Brand custodians are guilty of shoving their brands in the faces of their customers, consumers and fans.

- **For The Average Nigerian, Data Is Expensive:** Have we even thought that maybe Nigerians can’t afford to watch live videos? Widespread poverty is a cruel reality for us in Nigeria. Unlike other countries where data plans are relatively affordable, and there’s a 47% YoY increase in the consumption of live videos, Nigeria is not one of them. The bulk of the population earns less than the N30,000 minimum wage and are spending 95% of it on food and survival. It is quite expensive to spend at least N1000 on 1gb of data and squander it all on live videos.

So, how do we get our live videos to be the centre of interest, to be shared by thousands and to be the most talked-about?

Here’s a clue – Find that one thing that people care about, that one thing that’ll make them use all the data that they would have otherwise saved, and no it is not your brand or your ambassadors.

If unplanned videos work, how do we make our videos to be just as random, not too branded but just as interesting?

That’s the question. And I hope as brand custodians we can take a learning or two from the masters of influence – celebrities, artists, actors and socialites amongst others.

A key thing to note though is that this season is not about your brands but about your consumers. It is more about bringing people together and giving them something to find interesting and engaging.

I can’t wait to see what brand eventually breaks the cycle of the uninteresting brand-related live videos.

I’ll be on the lookout!

P.S. I think I speak for everyone when I say we’ve had enough of random live videos. Live videos are not a must-do! Don’t be a me-too. Be distinct!



Find that one thing that people care about, that one thing that’ll make them use all the data that they would have otherwise saved, and no it is not your brand or your ambassadors.

ABOUT ENITAN KEHINDE

Enitan Kehinde is a Lead Consultant at BHM. She leads day-to-day account management and client interfacing for clients like Nigerian Breweries Plc. and Coca-Cola Nigeria Limited. With undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Mass Communication and Public Relations, Enitan is a skilled marketing communications professional with over five years of experience, working in the PR industry.



ADAPT OR DIE: THE TWO OPTIONS COVID-19 PRESENTS ENTERTAINMENT BRANDS

BY NJIDEKA AKABOGU

I grew up in a very small town in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. Growing up, my family was one of the very few on our street who had a television set and a VCR.

What this meant was that every Sunday, our living room was filled to the brim with neighbours and their children who gathered to watch whatever new home video my father brought back from his latest trip to Aba. The rest of the crowd who couldn't fit into our small living room resorted to fighting over themselves to watch from the windows. I can't count how many curtains we had to either mend or replace as a result. This was my earliest introduction to Entertainment and the lengths people would often go to consume it.

Over the years, the footfall to our windows gradually dropped, not because

entertainment became any less important to our neighbours, but because a lot of them could now either afford to buy a TV set or found other more convenient means of accessing entertainment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has effectively disrupted life as we know it, and one of the most hard-hit sectors is the Entertainment Industry. According to Forbes, projections are that the global industry will lose about 10 billion dollars in revenue when all of this is over. And that is no surprise.

The pandemic and the resultant lockdown around the world has meant that major streams of revenue for the industry and its players have taken a hit. Productions have been shut down; concerts, tours and festivals have been put on hold. The doors to cinemas and nightclubs in most parts of the world have been sealed shut, and are likely going to remain that way for a while.

But, now more than ever, demand for entertainment is at an all-time high. Social/physical distancing means consumers are -in TikTok lingua- bored in the house and in the house bored. The copious amount of leisure time people now have on their hands and the uncertainty of the pandemic have everyone turning to entertainment for respite. Where footfalls to outdoor entertainment have tanked, online-based entertainment has witnessed a hike. The Multichoice owned streaming service, Showmax reportedly saw a boost of up to 50% at the onset of the lockdown. Netflix has had to crunch bandwidth in some parts of the world as a result of increased demand.

The streaming giant recorded a whopping 15.7 million new subscribers in the first 3 months of 2020, according to its Q1 2020 report. Instagram Live is another medium



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that has experienced an astronomical leap as a result of the lockdown; It's almost as if the purple circle bubbles at the top of our Instagram TL didn't exist before now.

So what happens when all of this is over? Are people going to abandon the entertainment consumption habits they've picked up during their time indoors once "the outside" opens? I don't think anyone actually knows for sure but one can wager that it would be a long time before things completely return to normal. For all we know this is the new normal.

Therefore, it is time the industry -- all the different spheres of it -- went back to the drawing board. Even if we get the all-clear in the next couple of weeks or months, it can no longer be business as usual. The pandemic has opened people up to new ways of doing things, and consumers' eyes to new and arguably safer, more convenient and cost-effective ways of accessing entertainment.

Brands who supply this entertainment can not afford to be left behind. There's ultimately going to be a shortage of entertainment supply if brands do not unlearn and relearn everything they knew about content production and distribution.

DJ D-nice's "Club Quarantine" on Instagram Live has shown us that we don't necessarily need to be in a club packed full with tens and hundreds of sweaty people to have a good time on a Friday night.

Canadian rapper Tory Lanez's controversial "Quarantine Radio" has served as a viable alternative to strip clubs.

MTV Shuga is currently airing a pan-African series entirely self-shot by the actors from the comfort of their homes in four different countries. Over 3 million people tuned in to Andrea Bocelli's 'Music For Hope' concert on YouTube, again, from the comfort of their homes. Almost every young person with access to a phone and working internet is creating video content on TikTok and racking up thousands of views.

In 2020, you no longer need a full production studio to turn out good content, you no longer need to have all your cast and crew in one place to produce content, you no longer need a physical audience to stage a concert. Heck, we're throwing birthday parties and having full-blown wedding ceremonies on Zoom these days. Things are changing and they are changing quite rapidly. Only the brands who are quick to adapt will survive the aftermath of this pandemic.

Yes, entertainment is always going to be central to our lives as human beings, it is that thread that holds us together when every other thing seems bent on pulling us apart. However, where and how people consume it won't always be the same - the gradual drop in footfalls to our windows in Umuahia showed me that much and so has this pandemic. Entertainment brands have two options really: either get with the times or get left behind.

ABOUT NJIDEKA AKABOGU

Njideka Akabogu is a media and communications expert with a demonstrated history of working in fashion and digital media, as well as marketing communications. The Information Science graduate is a PR & Communications Adviser at ID Africa that works with brands like Multichoice, VIACOMCBS and Betway to name a few.



our platforms - Netng, 234Star, Neusroom, and Orin.

Unsurprisingly, Nigeria's digital natives were spending more time on social media. A good majority of our respondents spent more than three hours on social media during the COVID-19 lockdown. Only 12.9% spent less than three hours online every day. 35% spent more than three hours on social media, 32% spent five-ten hours online, while 19.9%

spent more than ten hours surfing through social media.

Correspondingly, internet data fees went up for people, and 60% of respondents confirmed that they spent more than 5000 Naira on internet subscription fees during the COVID-19 lockdown.

On their most-used mobile app since the lockdown, 46% of the respondents confirmed that they had been spending more time on Whatsapp. Another 26% responded that they used the Twitter app more, while 17% chose Instagram as their go-to app during the lockdown.

With the emotional strain of observing the lockdown, people had begun to opt for more video calls in a bid to connect with loved ones and enjoy a sense of normalcy through the changes brought on by self-isolation and quarantine. Video calls were presumably used for work meetings as well since most companies had to enforce remote working policies for staff during the lockdown.

A large majority of our respondents (75%) had engaged in more video calls during the lockdown than they usually did. More than 45% of respondents used the Whatsapp video call feature, while Zoom came in at a close second with 34% use. Other video call applications used were Microsoft Teams

(8.6%) and Google Meet (3%).

Respondents reported that they continued to have issues with electricity during the lockdown, as 23% reported that they used their power generators for two-three hours every day. Another 26% say they had to keep their generators running for three-five hours daily, while 22% had to keep their generators powered on for as long as five-ten hours a day.

We also asked our respondents about the movie platforms they had used the most during the lockdown. 44% of the respondents replied that they had been watching movies on Netflix, while a combined 61% responded that they had been watching either DStv or GOtv. Only a very small segment of respondents had been watching movies on YouTube.

From our analysis, we realised that audience members engaged with certain categories of content better than others and engaged with certain kinds of content less than expected. We found that during the COVID-19 lockdown, our audience members wanted to stay informed, and as such, engaged with information around news, COVID-19 stats, etc. The COVID-19 lockdown was a trying time for Nigerians, so people also tried to balance out their media consumption by also engaging with entertainment-based content around topics of interest like their favourite celebrities, BBNaija, music, movies, etc.

Take a look at the full report [here](#).



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HOW NIGERIA'S DIGITAL NATIVES USED SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

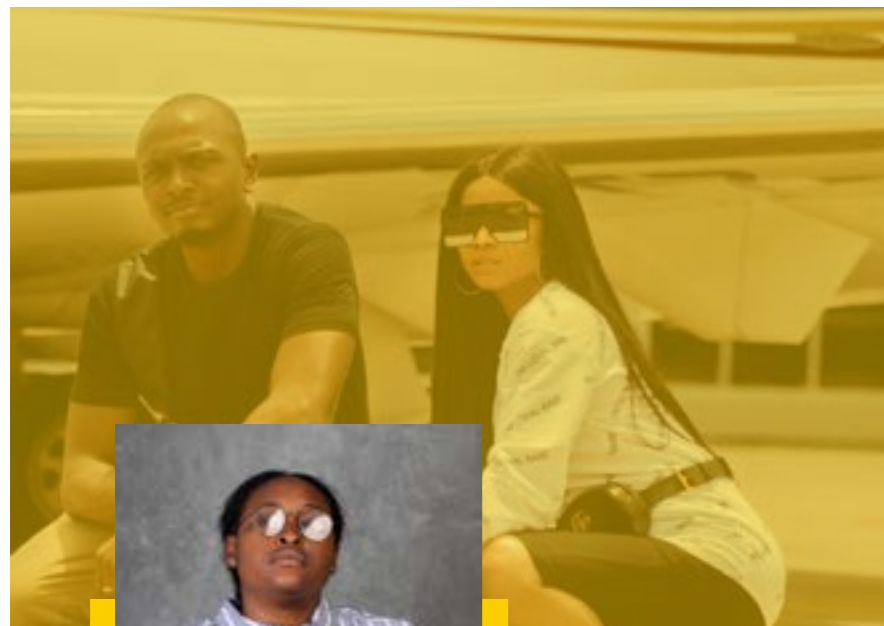
ID AFRICA

The global sweep of the COVID-19 pandemic changed life as we know it. Social distancing has become the new normal, and now more than ever, people are relying heavily on social media to stay connected.

With the general ban on large public gatherings in March 2020, people had to find new ways to keep themselves entertained and escape the tedium of observing the lockdown.

Staying home during the lockdown meant that people had a lot more free time on their hands than they usually did. How did Nigeria's digital natives use social media during the COVID-19 lockdown? What kind of content did they engage with online?

To get some answers, we conducted a survey of 200 young Nigerians and studied the activities of social media users across



SOCIAL ENGINEERING IS THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT WE SHOULD ALL BE EATING

BY SHARON GREY

I have always been fascinated with con artists. Not the ones that sit behind a computer and ask that you ‘rescue’ them from a prison in Rwanda so they can fly to you and will you their Grandfather’s riches. No, those guys are cowards.

The con artists I’m referring to are the **Abagnales** of the world, the ones that crawled and walked so that Nigerian Princes could run.

Anyone can hide behind a keyboard to do whatever, but the con artistry is only fully appreciated when it is a physical interaction because then, every move you make has the potential to either credit or discredit you.

It’s subtle, it’s pretty deep, it’s sensational, it’s an assumption of characteristics and

features — it’s an electric emotional bond.

If you are the target, you are not sure WHY you feel the way you feel but what you don’t know is that every move has been designed to make you feel exactly the way you do.

It’s mind-boggling, isn’t it? — the psychology behind it can be attributed to the amoral field of social engineering.

A quick search on Google will tell you that social engineering is ‘the use of deception to manipulate individuals into divulging confidential or personal information that may be used for fraudulent purposes’. Meh.

While this is largely true, I’d say the preceding paragraph is a flippant definition for a disruptive social tool, and I don’t blame anyone for perceiving it this way because people fear what they don’t understand.

The thing about lies is that the liar dresses it up so beautifully in order to distract the mark from seeing that the matter has no substance. But I often wonder why people with substance are not just bothered to dress theirs up nicely enough to attract, lol maybe because they think the truth will set them free.

My definition of social engineering is; The appeal to the unconscious mind through verbal and most importantly, non-verbal cues. That’s just all it is, an appeal – “like me”, “interact with me”, “trust me”.

It’s what organisations have been indirectly saying to their customers. It’s what celebrities have always wanted from their fans. It’s what everyone would like to have from their larger communities.

It’s not manipulation, it’s a calculation of socially agreeable cultural interactions as

an appeal to the unconscious mind. When we reverse-engineer our perceptions of social engineering, only then can we begin to enjoy its low hanging fruits.

Think about it. Back in the days, we feared hackers. It wasn’t until we realised that when we flip the intentions behind the actions, then we could mine that knowledge for our social advantage and protection.

Why Should We Social Engineer?

There is a lot of chatter going on in the news, on TV, on social media, even on the streets, everyone’s got something to say. Communication on an individual and organizational level has become a huge d**k swinging contest, a cycle that rinses and repeats.

It’s not a battle of who’s being heard by the relevant stakeholders but who’s making the loudest noise. Communication has become a game of impressions and Twitter trends. The audience is tone-deaf to brand communications.

There is a huge information overload and everyone is sick and tired of it. Influence is the singular most important thing to possess in these streets. It’s as simple as it’s complicated.

If you check within the Psychological context, another definition of Social Engineering emerges which says, “The use of centralized planning in an attempt to manage social change and regulate the future development and behaviour of a society”.

Social Engineering is in-depth research into culture and lifestyle. Social Engineering is the management of sensation and perception. Social Engineering is why the celebrity culture is rabid. Social Engineering is why religion is a thing. Social Engineering is why a lot of people are unemployed. Social Engineering is why a lot of businesses are shutting down.

Who Should Social Engineer?

Every entity that wants to win.

ABOUT SHARON GREY

Sharon is a social engineer and human experience specialist, fluent in people, pop-culture and strategic communications. Sharon is presently a PR & Communications Adviser at ID Africa.



HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE'S SEO

BY LEYE MAKANJUOLA

If you manage a website for yourself or for clients, one recurring concern would be search engine optimisation (SEO). SEO can sound like a super technical or boring subject, but it's actually quite fascinating if you really look at it.

In the simplest possible terms, SEO is how the content on your website is optimised to be found by search engines.

Here are some general tips for improving your website's SEO:

- **Use An SEO Audit Tool**

With an SEO audit tool, you can check how well your website meets Google's SEO standard. Google is not the only search engine out there, but it's the most popular one used by people on the web. A report

on leading search engines showed that Google accounts for 92.94% and 71.75% of mobile and desktop searches respectively.

SEO audit tools like SEMrush, Moz, Google Search Console, etc. can help point out some small but important changes you can make to a website to significantly boost its search presence.

- **Content Is Still King**

For a website's content to rank well on search engines, you will have to put in the work of creating great quality content. Search engines rank content that give direct answers to users' queries online, so your content should be clear enough to provide direct answers to the questions users might have on a given subject.

Long-form content is also preferred over shorter content because it is believed to be more in-depth and to offer more value to the user.

- **The More, The Merrier**

Don't think your website or blog posts have to contain only text. As Leye explained, search engines rank website posts containing varied forms of multimedia like video, photos, audio, GIFs, etc.

The more multimedia contained in your post, the better ranking it is likely to have. As you create blog posts from the backend, remember to always name the files you use appropriately. Constantly uploading files titled 'IMG 002328984' will not help your long term SEO efforts.

- **More Power To The Backlinks**

Backlinks are when another website references the content on your own site via hyperlinks. The more backlinks your website has from reliable and highly ranked

websites, the more relevance the search engine will attribute to your website. Backlinks are important to SEO efforts because it shows that other sites trust and value the content on your site. This in turn indicates that your website is producing quality content, so Google is likely to recommend it to searchers as an authority on the subject they seek.

- **Brownie Points For A Good URL Structure**

A lot of people do not pay attention to how their URL links look when publishing posts on their website, but it's pretty important. It's best to keep your URLs short and descriptive. Incorporating your keywords into the URL also earns you a few SEO brownie points, so you should adjust to doing that too.

- **Keyword research is ... key?**

With keyword research tools like SEMRush and Google Keyword Planner, you can find out what your audience is searching for and create content that answers those questions.

TIP: If you have a business and you want it to be more visible online, your content strategy should include incorporating certain keywords that reflect your business,

so that over time, your business will be seen when people are searching for those keywords.

- **This Plugin Will Come In Handy**

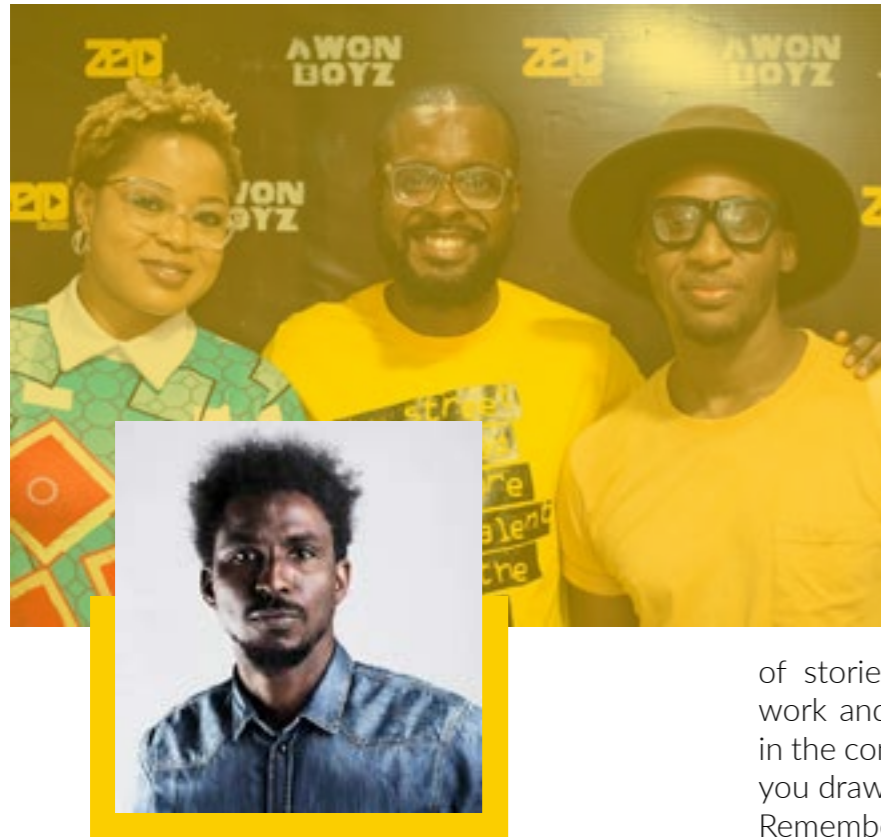
If you are on a content management system (CMS) like WordPress, using the Yoast SEO plugin can help you improve some SEO factors as you create your blog post. Yoast's readability and keyword analysis tool will share helpful tips to ensure your post is better optimized for search by pointing out things you can improve such as: including the keywords in your title and metadata, adding the alt tag to your images, and lots more.

Which of these SEO tips do you need to start implementing today?

(These tips were shared by the Founder and CEO of Intense Digital, Leye Makanjuola at a virtual event on "Tips And Techniques for Search Engine Optimisation". Compiled by Efe Ukpebor.)

ABOUT LEYE MAKANJUOLA

With about 10 years of marketing communications experience, Leye Makanjuola is an entrepreneur, innovator, marketing and technology professional. He is the CEO of digital marketing agency, Intense.



JUNKYARDS, REVERSE ENGINEERING, AND EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING WITH VISUAL DESIGN

BY KAYODE OLOWU - ONEWILDCARD

Just like the contents of a real junkyard, I find these materials for my creative junkyard in the oddest places – like the comments section of popular Instagram accounts and the end credits of animated movies.

● **Dig Deep**

To tell the best stories, you'll have to dig deep to find what everyone else hasn't found yet. Most people consume the same kind of content, and therefore create the same kind

of stories. So what will distinguish your work and help you tell effective stories is in the content you consume and the places you draw inspiration from.

Remember, there are no diamonds on the surface level. Dig deep.

● **Tap Into Consumer Habits**

Some of the best stories are the ones that tap into the existing habits and cultural nuances of the people you're talking to. Let your stories be a nod to an inside joke your target audience can relate with. This makes them feel seen and more likely to pay attention to the story you're telling.

● **Follow The Consumer Journey**

In creating stories about a brand or product, ask questions about how the consumer interacts with it. Do they use the product at a particular time of the day? Where do they use it? How do they use it? What do they think about the brand?

Answering questions like these as you create your stories will help you get into the consumer's head and create stories they won't be forgetting in a hurry.

● **Use Analogies**

Again, ask questions. What is the product or essential brand message similar to? What

does it remind people of? How would you communicate it if it was a meme? In using analogies, we learn to find the connection between things that seem pretty different and even cross ideas from one industry to another.

● **Reverse Engineer The Process**

Most times, we consume great content passively, and just say things like 'hey, this is great!', 'big ups to the team', but that could be you if you think deeper.

So when you see content that resonates, ask yourself how the team that worked on the project arrived at that idea. What questions did they ask? How did they successfully sell the idea to the client? Analysing the idea that blew your mind helps you learn the process of creating something equally amazing.

Finally, do not just do good work, but go out there and do great work.

(These tips were shared by the Founder and Creative Director of OneWildCard, Kayode Olowu at a virtual event on "Effective Storytelling With Visual Design". Compiled by Efe Ukpebor.)

ABOUT KAYODE OLOWU

Kayode Olowu, the founder and creative director of Onewildcard. He has worked with indigenous and global brands in Africa and Europe and has successfully led teams to deliver strategy, oversee planning and execution of diverse marketing communications projects.

Even if you don't consider yourself to be a visual content creator, you'll definitely find this piece useful in one way or the other.

Here are a few tips to learn on effective storytelling:

● **Build A Junkyard**

Come on, I don't mean an actual junkyard, I mean a folder of random ideas, designs, ads, and various kinds of interesting content. Having a junkyard might not seem important right now, but it is a priceless treasure for those times you're out of ideas and desperately need inspiration.



HOW TO GROW YOUR BRAND ON INSTAGRAM IN 2020

PLAQAD

Instagram hit the 10-year mark in 2020 and if you've been paying attention, you would have noticed the steady growth in its usage and its features.

Getting more followers and ultimately growing your brand is not as easy as it used to be. This is because Instagram's new algorithm puts emphasis on more organic qualities like frequency, interest, and relationship.

Nevertheless, there are some things you can do to get more people interested in your brand. These nine tips are hacks you can apply to grow your brand on Instagram in 2020.

- **Use Stories**

Instagram's stories can be exciting for you and for your audience. Apps like StoryArt, Unfold, and Canva, have some beautiful templates you can use if you don't know

how to get started. Another exciting prospect is that users can view stories right atop their feed, so even if they don't get to your post, you can get their attention on your stories.

Also, you can capitalize on your story highlights if you organize them on your profile. It goes a long way towards enhancing your brand image. Make sure each highlight has a theme.

- **Share Quality Content**

Posting consistently helps your chances of reaching people who use Instagram at different times. Nonetheless, if the majority of those posts are not aesthetically pleasing enough to grab attention at first glance, it may not be worth it. Put out content you can be proud of, or better yet, put out content, so good, people want to share it.

- **Work On Your Profile & Grid**

Your profile is very important. This is where a visitor gets to know what you're about. Since the goal here is for that visitor to click the follow button, it's advisable to:

- **Use keywords particular to your industry & the visitor's interest**

- **Write a compelling bio**

- **Make your profile fun**

Your grid is also something you should work on. This is the full view of the posts on your page. Planoly, Plann, and Preview App, are great apps that can help you with this.

- **Give Them A Reason To Come Back**

One-off posts are good, however, posts that allude to a series are better. If your post is around an outfit, pairing for a particular

day or season, viewers should be able to tell that there will be more coming. If they enjoyed that post, they'll be back.

- **Work With Other Influencers & Other Brands**

Working with influencers and other brands gets you facetime with their followers. If you're worried about how to get to big influencers, reports show that micro-influencers actually have better engagement rates, compared to the big names.

You know those burger & drink meals that are presented as an added value because both brands are working together, look at working with other brands this way. If the brand aligns with yours, their followers may very well relate to your brand. You can run a background check on other brands before collaborating with them. SocialCred is a good tool to help you achieve this. It provides you with key social media account metrics that help you know which accounts are doing well enough to attract the kind of attention you want.

- **Tell A Story With Your Captions**

Longer captions are better for your posts when they are well written. You get to give a little something extra. A good long or short story can pique the interest of an average user, and if they find it enjoyable, your brand begins to resonate more; this would not be the case if they just gave you a like and moved on.

- **Get Active On Similar Accounts**

Your goal should be to ultimately build a community around your brand. Post comments on other brand posts. Once in a while, you could do the same with influencers or accounts with a lot of followers. They have to align with your brand though.

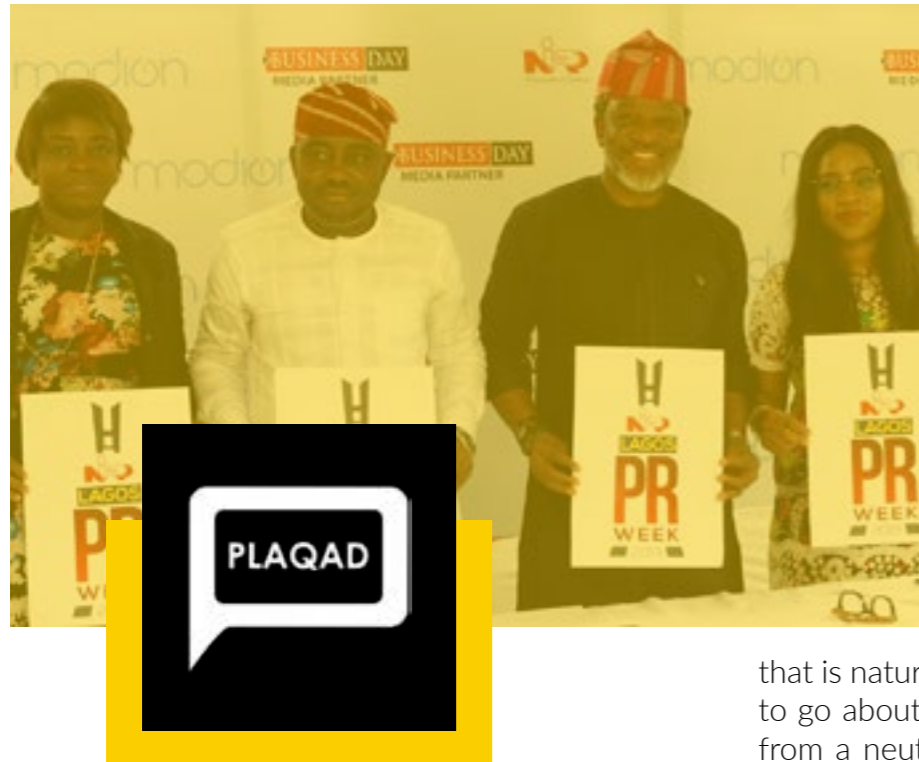
- **Post More Videos**

Instagram videos get better engagements than image-based posts. It's as simple as that. Videos take more time to create, but they are worth it. You also don't always have to break the bank for videos. You can create videos with your phone and edit them using apps like Magisto, Wondershare, FilmoraGo, and InShot.

- **Start Your Own Hashtag**

You can start a movement based on your brand hashtag. If it gets going, other people can begin to use it, and it inherently grows your brand. Geotags are also a good idea for helping people feel closer to your brand.

You can begin to see significant Instagram growth if you follow good processes, use the right tips, and are consistent with your efforts.



5 QUICK WAYS TO GENERATE MORE ENGAGEMENT ON FACEBOOK

PLAQAD

Any action someone takes on your Facebook page or on any one of your posts is basically engagement. Engagement is visible through likes, comments, shares, and even when you are tagged on a post.

Facebook's algorithm favours posts with good engagement. These types of posts will appear more prominently on different user news feeds.

Good engagement is also an indication of your audience's genuine interest in your brand. Increased interest in your page means they are more likely to share your content. This tells you that your audience is actively involved in getting more people to see your content, and in turn, your page.

If you feel your Facebook page has not been getting as much engagement as you would like, with these tips below, you can

begin to garner significantly more engagement.

- **Look To Entertain, Educate, Inform or Inspire Your Audience**

One thing to remember is that your audience does want to be sold to all the time. Your focus should be to entertain, educate, inform, or inspire your audience with your content. With this in mind, you will churn out content

that is naturally more relatable. A good way to go about this is to look at your content from a neutral point of view. It should be the sort of thing you would interact with if you viewed it on your personal feed.

- **Create Short, Quality Content**

It's best to just assume every single person you intend to interact with, has a short attention span. This way you will gravitate towards creating generally more concise content. A reported 88% of Facebook users, view content mostly on their mobile phones. The short format is definitely the way to go. Quality images and videos also make your content look richer and generally more attractive.

- **Post Consistently**

Having a regular post schedule gives your audience something to look forward to. It takes a lot of effort, but you have to post regularly for your audience to get used to seeing your content. Facebook Insights can tell you when most of your fans are online. This way you can post when they are most likely to view it.

- **Interact With Your Audience**

Responding to comments on your posts provides very positive visibility for your brand. Every time you respond to a

comment, you strengthen the relationship you have with that person, and you give other fans the impression of being very relatable. Interacting with your audience indirectly also helps boost your visibility. You can do this by being active on Facebook groups that your fans belong to.

- **Direct traffic From Other Platforms**

Share links to your Facebook posts on your other platforms. This gets your content in the eyes of people who don't necessarily follow your page.

Visit socialcred.plaqad.com to find out your Facebook engagement rate and know how well your page is doing.



distancing, lockdowns, self-isolation, and curfews, being set in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. The need to accomplish tasks without physical interaction (digitally) has increased greatly, and because of these strategies and information channels, we can look forward to a time when this is all a thing of the past.

New digital platforms that are helping people get through this time are springing up, and changes in offline and online interactions are coming with increasing speed.

One intriguing thing that should be considered, however, is what your relationship with your audience should look like right now and beyond. Your interaction with your prospects should not stop, because if it does you run the risk of fading into the background.

An attractively suitable means of communication is influencer marketing.

Over the years, influencer marketing has grown into a well-established advertising and communication medium. The multi-billion-dollar industry sprung up with only a handful of influencers with a loyal audience and now there are hundreds of influencers across the globe who now stand as communications channels for different brands.

In this time when everything is being regulated for safety reasons and the world moves more towards digital solutions, it is possible to give your brand a visible voice and be confident that your message will get across to its intended audience.

Right now, people across the globe are spending record-breaking amounts of time in their homes and on the internet, this

THE INCREASINGLY WELCOME PROSPECT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

PLAQAD

There is a definite air of uncertainty making its way around right now. New developments have forced businesses and business owners to put their previous plans and strategies in the backseat for the time being. Different entities are being forced to adapt to a new way of living and interacting with each other.

One factor to hold on to is that everyone is having these experiences, albeit in different degrees, at the same time. You can rest in the certainty that your business is not the only organism going through changes, your audiences are experiencing changes as well. Nevertheless, the world has not stopped and your business activities do not have to either, rather they need to adapt to the current situation of things.

People are finding new ways to get things done, especially with measures such as social

is actually a very positive development because it means more and more people are getting vital information and adhering to the guidelines that would eventually make this ordeal a thing of the past.

If the rise of the age of technology has taught us anything, it is that once people begin to experience performing tasks and activities using new media, they pretty much adopt it as part of their lifestyle. The number of active internet users is only ever going to increase, the smart thing to do for your business right now may very well be to optimize your efforts in such a way that it takes advantage of established new media like influencer marketing.

Now more than ever people want to connect with their brands and many times it means putting a friendly face or a name to the company. Influencers have

this appeal when they interact with their audiences on behalf of brands. They are able to provide useful information as well as put a friendly and familiar face to the brand they represent.

Your intended audience may not be able to leave their homes right now, and they may not be able to interact with other traditional you may or may not have used to market your business, but they have not stopped interacting with the media entirely.

Informative, entertaining, educative and vital content is continuously being spread across various digital platforms and is still reaching audiences of different sizes and demographics. This variety of content is largely still being spread, mostly by influencers and they have been able to maintain their relationships with their audiences.



8 THINGS THE SOCIALCRED APP TAUGHT US ABOUT USING SOCIAL MEDIA

PLAQAD

SocialCred is a free social media ranking tool that uses key metrics such as total followers, engagement rate, as well as audience sentiment to calculate social media clout. Users are then rewarded with witty ranks to match their clout.

Since the launch of SocialCred, several social media users have taken to the tool to find their ranks and get tips on how to create better content and increase their ranks.

The SocialCred app has so far taught us a number of lessons on using social media better. Below are some of them:

Sometimes, quality over quantity

Most people believe that the higher a person's follower count, the higher their rank. However, while follower count is quite important, it isn't the most important

determinant. A user with 1,000 followers can have a higher engagement rate than another with 10,000 followers, therefore scoring higher on the tool.

Post more original content
 Reposting and curating posts is not the best idea if your intention is to grow your social media platform.

Users with higher ranks have mastered the art of creating original content as opposed to repurposing or reposting those created by others.

Be interactive

Make your audience feel important by interacting with them as well, through replies, retweets and comments. By doing this, you increase your engagement rate and also make your audience feel like part of your inner circle, giving them a reason to keep coming back.

Study your audience

Audience sentiment is a key metric on the SocialCred app, and it encompasses how your audience reacts to your posts. Study the content that seems to excite them and focus on creating more of those.

Don't jump on every trend

While trending topics are a good way to make your voice heard, not every trend should be jumped on. More times than not, your voice gets lost in the multitude of other voices in the process.

Be creative, not cliché

Find new tactics that work for your own page, you don't have to follow the ones that worked for the 90,000 other social media users.

Post content that is contextual

Don't stick to a 'one size fits all' strategy, for your accounts on different platforms. Be diverse. Instagram is more picture centric than Twitter, and Youtube videos cannot always be posted on Facebook. Remember this when you are creating content.

Stay consistent

Some social media users update their accounts once a month and then disappear for long periods. This should not be the case. With consistent and strategic posting, you will build a community on social media.

Still haven't checked your clout or copped one of our cool badges on the SocialCred tool?

[Click here](#) to find out if you're rolling with the big boys and girls on these social media streets.



HOW TO GET ORGANIC INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

PLAQAD

Instagram has made a point of constantly changing its algorithm to suit what users engage with more. This makes sense because it makes the experience more enjoyable for the users. Right now, posts with high likes, comments, and general engagements are favoured more. They appear on more timelines and the cycle continues. Getting more followers on your account means you have to plug into these new systems. There are a few things you can try out to boost your number of followers.

Put a Strategy Together

Putting a strategy together is a good start. Here you can define your goals and put down how you plan to achieve them. This would include things like your content calendar, your niche, and your personal brand. When you know what you want your account to be about, you can act accordingly. Your eventual audience gets

the perception you want them to have.

Research your target

Take some time to browse around for the kind of users who would most likely be interested in your page. Essentially, check out the kind of stuff they check out. There are accounts with huge followings that attract followers who share an appreciation for that particular niche. That's a perfect archetype to use.

This way you can begin to create content with your intended audience in mind.

Try Different Content Types

It's good to have a good mix of content. Try original videos, try slideshows, try graphics, try images, try popular user-generated content (even from your current followers). Also, try different content tones and themes. Try witty content, informative content, educational content, and so on. These different content types apply to all Instagram features. This means you should adjust to a short format for stories and long format for IGTV. Most importantly try to have fun with it. If it excites you, chances are it will excite someone else and encourage them to share.

Promote your page on other platforms

Take advantage of your presence on other platforms. Share your Instagram posts across all of them and encourage people to like, comment, and follow the account. When properly put, you can pique the interest of anybody, even if they do not frequently use Instagram.

Measure and re-strategize

Now that you have put in all that effort, you need to know exactly how your page is doing. Social media measuring and

listening tools can help you do this. They help you see what your audience's overall reactions are, your engagement rate and other metrics.

You can also compare your account with other well-established accounts and then go back to see what you can improve on.



HOW TO GROW INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS FOR A BUSINESS

PLAQAD

As one of the most inexpensive marketing platforms, Instagram is a great way to promote your business. With a good understanding of how the platform works, you can get the kind of exposure you need to take your business to where it should be.

This could lead to eventual tangible returns. Instagram's newest features allow you to run your business solely on the platform, should you decide to. If you prefer to use it as a cog in the wheel of your overall marketing channels, it also works adequately. You can get leads and direct traffic to your page, and from your page to other platforms like your website.

To make any significant headway, however, you need a sizable follower base. These are some things you can do to increase your number of followers.

Optimize Your Business Account

Firstly, you need to opt for an Instagram Business Account. A business account gives you access to features you wouldn't get on a personal account. You have access to your page's insights, Instagram ads, Instagram shopping, and a specific call-to-action button.

Get Started On Branding

One unique way to get your page to stand out is by branding it. You want your page to have a recognizable look and feel. This helps people identify you better when they come across your content on their timelines. Tools like Planoly are great for this.

Use The Right Hashtags and Geotags

Hashtags can work wonders for getting your content in front of users who don't follow your page. You should start specific hashtags for your brand to make them popular. You should also research and make use of industry-specific hashtags. A simple hashtag search can give you the trending and most popular hashtags for your industry. Geotags also give your posts a local and relatable feel.

Roll-out Posts & Stories Meticulously

Planning your posts ahead of time helps you get organized. This helps you with consistency. Your account will get more engagements if you are able to post regularly. A great way to get started is by having a content calendar. You can create quick stories with Fastory and organize your posts with Hootsuite.

Use Instagram Metric Tools & Clone Your Competition

Getting your account metrics is very important. More important is getting

metrics on your competition. If there are other businesses in your niche that are doing relatively well, it doesn't hurt to take a cue or two from them. You can even go further as to studying their followers and poaching them. The Plaqad Social Cred app can give you comprehensive metrics on your account any other account you choose.

Interact With Your Community

Your Instagram account can serve as your customer support centre. You can respond to complaints, make suggestions, and generally have fun with your audience.

They are more likely to recommend you to their friends and family if they have good experiences with your brand.

Try Out Influencers & Ads

Influencers are a great way to get your brand in the eyes of a large number of people who wouldn't ordinarily know about your brand. If you can afford it also, try out some sponsored content. Instagram has a great system for showing ads to any demographic that you choose.



Already have an audience on Twitter and Instagram? Simply ask them to follow you on TikTok too.

- **Drive Traffic to your other social media platforms**

With 60 seconds-long videos or less you can leverage the high engagement rate on TikTok to drive more people to your other social media platforms like Instagram or

YouTube by simply including your handles in the video. This way you are able to grow your followers on other platforms.

- **High Post Engagement**

Compared to Instagram and Twitter, the TikTok algorithm makes it easier and more flexible making it easy for you to have high engagement on your posts in a short period of time. Nano and micro-influencers can record up to 9.4% engagement rate on the app compared to IG where they can record up to 7.2% and Twitter where they can record up to 1.4%. Also, the app has more excited and active users who are willing to engage faster with content they see than other apps or social media platforms do.

- **Partner with more brands**

With TikTok it is easy to capture the attention of young people, especially Gen Zs. The advance analytics, flexible algorithm and ease of driving high engagement rate makes the platform best for gaining fast visibility at this time. You can also leverage your analytics which covers your content overview, content insights and follower insights to track data, how good your content is doing and what your audience loves to see. This makes the app an ideal platform for influencer marketing and gives you the advantage of being easily identified by brands and collaborating with them on

projects.

- **High level of Resonance**

If you're active on TikTok, you have most likely participated in at least one TikTok challenge. With the average TikToker spending at least 52 minutes on the app per day, getting people to participate in a challenge on the app is much easier compared to other social media platforms.

Also, 90% of TikToker users access the app at least once per day. This means that the more you are able to create viral videos, the higher engagement you get on your post, and the more followers you will be able to acquire over time.

Still not sure if you should download the app? Don't be left wondering where the party has moved to because the cool kids on the block are already partying on TikTok.

Join the train and begin your journey today as a TikTok influencer.

5 REASONS WHY YOU NEED TO GET ON TIKTOK NOW

PLAQAD

When you hear TikTok, what comes to mind? Short video clips, viral challenges and the likes, right? Well, you're not wrong.

With over 1.5 Billion downloads worldwide and 800 Million active users, TikTok is one of the top 5 social media apps in 2020. Here are 5 reasons why you should jump on the TikTok bandwagon now if you haven't:

- **Build a strong community**

Very popular with Gen Zs and millennials, TikTok is growing fast in Nigeria and with many young Nigerians having to stay home these days, the usage of the app has definitely increased. According to Similar Web mobile app ranking, "TikTok Lite" currently ranks as the number 1 mobile app in Nigeria on Google Play Store, while "TikTok- Make Your Day" ranks as number 7. This is, therefore, a good time to extend your influence beyond Instagram, Twitter and co and build your audience on TikTok.



Firstly, let's define what Twitter engagement looks like.

Essentially when people reply to or comment on your tweets, retweet your tweets, click on a link you have posted, and even further, interact with each other on your tweet, you are getting engagement.

Now, how do you get your tweets to become hubs for all this activity? Here are

some tips to help you:

Take an analytical look at what you've been doing

You should take your time doing this. Twitter has a very useful tool for measuring your tweet activity. You can look at the impressions and engagements on each of your tweets. This is basically how many times people saw your tweets, and how many of them interacted with the tweets. You can do this by simply clicking on the check activity button on each tweet. If you do this thoroughly, you'll be able to pinpoint what kind of tweets have the highest number of engagement.

For a full view of your account, however, you can use the Twitter Analytics tool or Socialcred. They help you know statistics like your overall impressions and profile visits, page sentiment, etc.

Narrow down your desired audience

You should also do a bit of research on your most preferred audience. This way you can ensure that you are communicating with the people who are most likely to take the kind of decisions you want. This brings us to our next point.

Stalk Your Competition to see what actually works

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR ENGAGEMENT ON TWITTER

PLAQAD

Twitter has become a very important platform for reaching large audiences. If you are looking to build a brand or to further establish your brand, Twitter can help you accomplish that. With more than 321 Million monthly users and an emphasis on conversations, you can build and sustain meaningful, long term relationships, and subsequently, build a community.

However, getting substantial engagement can take a bit of effort. A lot of times, you could find yourself preparing and posting content that people don't interact with. There are a number of reasons for that. It could be that you are creating the kind of content that appeals to you, rather than to your intended audience. It could also be that your content is not getting to as many people as it should.

Stay with us, we're going to show you a few things you can start doing to see those engagement numbers go up.

You can look at accounts for brands similar to yours. This will give you a better understanding of the kind of people who would appreciate your brand and in turn your content. Keep in mind that you have to create a definable brand for yourself. Simply copying what similar brands are doing won't separate you from the crowd. Your research focus should be on getting ideas.

Create content that appeals to your audience

Now that you have ample information, you can then go on to create the kind of content that would appeal to your desired audience.

You should endeavour to tweet as many times as you can. The more times you put out content, the better your chances of reaching more people. Try out different types of content. You can then measure each one to see which type of content gets the most interactions, and more importantly, interactions from your desired audience.

Retweeting tweets that your audience may enjoy is also a good way to go. You simply have to make sure that they align with your brand. You can mention followers who have large numbers of followers themselves. This gets more people to see your tweets and your engagement numbers go up again.

Use measuring tools to keep your account healthy

Running continuous checks on your account is also important. Once you begin to attract a lot of attention on Twitter, more people will begin to take a closer look at your activity.

One way to keep tabs on your audience sentiment is by using the SocialCred app. You can know in exact terms if your audience reacts to your account positively or negatively, at any point in time. A good way to get yourself more positive reactions is to get more involved with your followers.

A lot of people use Twitter to convey the issues they have with brands. Much like customer service operations, you have to reply to their issues and attempt to resolve them as soon as you can.

PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANTS' ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (PRCAN)

The Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria is a trade sectoral group for the public relations industry in Nigeria. Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN) was founded in 1984. Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria aggregates and articulates the interest of member firms.

PRCAN works to uphold best practice in public relations in Nigeria in the areas of standards, conduct as well as economic well-being for the public relations industry generally and public relations consulting in particular for the benefit of all stakeholders.

ENABLING LAW

PRCAN's Enabling Law Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria draws legal backing primarily from Bye Law Number 3 1993 of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations Act 16, 1990, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria. The Corporate Affairs Commission incorporated PRCAN Limited by Guarantee as a "private company" with legal personality on May 24, 2007. The primary objective of PRCAN is the promotion of professional reputation management in Nigeria within the public and private sectors. Other aims and objectives include to:

- Promote the practice of professional public relations consultancy in Nigeria;
- Support, educate, promote, encourage and assist Nigerian professional public relations consultants;
- Promote public relations ethics and professionalism amongst Nigerian professional public relations consultants;

- Award monetary grants, facilities, support and assistance to Nigerian professional public relations consultants;

- Provide institutional, intellectual and other productive support to professional public relations consultants within Nigeria, and to establish a pool of financial and material resources, which will be made available to public relations consultants in Nigeria;

- Admit eligible public relations consultants/practitioners into the Association;

- Instill and continuously maintain a high level of professional discipline and standard amongst the members of the Association through the implementation of the provisions of the Code of Professional Conduct prepared and maintained by the Association for its members;

- Hold seminars, lectures and conferences on substantive issues relating to professional public relations consultancy in Nigeria in order to enhance public relations and appreciation of the role of professional public relations consultants in promoting an open and civil society;

- Keep and maintain a Register of public relations consultants; and

- Act as the spokesperson of public relations consultants in Nigeria and to generally cater to the welfare of public relations consultants in Nigeria.

Exclusion from practice by virtue of its enabling law, membership of PRCAN is a legal requirement for firms wishing to offer public relations services in Nigeria.

It is illegal for companies and organizations not registered with PRCAN to offer public



REGULATORY BODIES OF NIGERIA'S PR INDUSTRY

PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANTS'
ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (PRCAN)

NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC
RELATIONS (NIPR)

relations services in Nigeria, and for clients to offer briefs to them.

CODE OF CONSULTANCY PRACTICE

A member firm has a general duty of fair dealing towards its clients, past and present, fellow members and the public. In this respect, a member firm shall:

- Be free to represent its capabilities and services to any potential client, either on its own initiative or at the behest of the client, provided in so doing it does not seek to persuade the client to break any existing contract or detract from the service of same.
- Cause all its clients to be listed in the Annual Register of PRCAN. Cause all its Directors, Executives and Retained Consultants who hold Public Office, as members of National and State Assemblies, and members of Local Government or any statutory organization or body, to be recorded in the relevant sections of the Annual Register of PRCAN.
- Not engage in any practice, which tends to corrupt the integrity of channels of public communication or legislation.
- Not propose to clients any action that would constitute an improper influence on organs of government or legislation.
- Not intentionally disseminate false or misleading information, and is under obligation to use reasonable care to avoid dissemination of false or misleading information.
- Only represent competing interests with the consent of all those concerned.

- Inform a client of any shareholding or financial interest held by that firm in any company, firm or person whose services it recommends.

- Negotiate, propose or agree terms with client based on the resources that can reasonably be expected to apply. Be free to accept fees, commissions or other valuable considerations from persons other than a client, in connection with services for that client, provided such considerations is disclosed to the client.

- Not support to serve some announced cause while actually serving an undisclosed special or private interest. Not offer to give or cause a client to offer or give any inducement to such persons as described in Article 4 above who are not Directors, Executives or Retained Consultants with intent to further the interests of the member or of the client if such action is inconsistent with the public interest.

- Not engage in any practice and not to be seen to conduct itself in any manner detrimental to the interest of Public Relations Consultancy.

- Safeguard the confidence of both present and former clients and shall not disclose or use these confidences to the disadvantages or prejudice of such clients or the financial advantage of the member firm.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION

1. Head of agency must have:

- First Degree or equivalent
- NIPR membership
- 5 years' experience

2. Agency to have:

- 5 Employees minimum
- 3 functional departments minimum (Media, Client Service and Corporate services)
- Heads of the departments must have first degrees or equivalent, and NIPR membership

HOW TO APPLY

- Executive Secretary acknowledges each application
- Membership Committee sits to screen/evaluate applications
- Schedule and visit the agency for inspection/assessment
- Reports/recommendations to the Executive Committee
- EXCO makes final decision
- EXCO communicates decision to the Applicant
- Formal Inauguration

NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS (NIPR)

Established in 1963, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) the professional body of qualified Public Relations Practitioners, attained charter status in 1990 with Decree 16 (now Act of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).

The Law mandates NIPR to regulate the practice and direct the development of Public Relations as a profession in Nigeria. The law also makes it illegal to practice Public Relations, under any title, in Nigeria without NIPR certification.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote and develop the art and science of Public Relations practice in Nigeria.
- To establish, prescribe and ensure the observance of high standards of professional and ethical practice.
- To provide facilities, advice and opportunities for executives to meet and discuss Public Relations problems and

case studies, and thereby improve the standards of Public Relations practice in Nigeria.

- To encourage the acquisition of professional qualifications in Public Relations through the provision of examinations and other facilities.
- Build a credible and dynamic professional institution that is responsive to Nigeria's needs.
- To conduct research, collect and disseminate information on all aspects of Public Relations.
- To publish journals, books, practice papers and guidelines.
- Promote professional excellence through members upholding the Code of Ethic, Code of Conduct and through the Professional Standards Guide (PSG). The PSG entrenches a system of lifelong learning as well as gaining stakeholders' commitment to high standard of PR

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

Qualifications for membership of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations are periodically reviewed to meet the requirements by the public and the organized private sector (industry and commerce).

In 1998, a decision was reached that all entrants must hold any of the following qualifications:

- The Institute's Professional Certificate and Diploma in Public Relations
- CAM Foundation Certificate and

Diploma in Communications Studies and Public Relations

- British Institute of Public Relations Membership Diploma;
- Business Education Examinations Council (BEEC) Professional Certificate and Diploma in Public Relations
- B.A., B.Sc., HND, MA, M.Sc., or Ph.D. in Public Relations; B.Sc., B.A. (Mass Communications), MBA with major / specialization in PR; or any recognized equivalent qualification.

practice to give more value and strategic to those the professional serves.

- Encourage a more relevant institutes and more reputation sensitive society, by working with appropriate associations to generate sustained focus on the contributions of stakeholders in different sectors.

NIPR CODE OF ETHICS

Nigerian Institute of Public Relations Public Relations Practitioners Decree No. 16 of 1990 empowers the Council of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations to determine what standards of knowledge and skills are to be attained by Public Relations practitioners. For high standards

of practice. The Institute must from time to time update its Code of Professional Conduct. The decree empowers the Council to make bylaws and other rules not inconsistent with this decree as to acts which constitute professional misconduct.

In pursuance of the provision of the decree, the Council of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations hereby makes the following Bye Laws to be known as "The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations Code of Professional Conduct Bye-laws No. 1 of 1992.



PRCAN: Code of Consultancy Practice



A member firm has a general duty of fair dealing towards its clients, past and present, fellow members and the public.

In this respect, a member firm shall:

- Be free to represent its capabilities and services to any potential client, either on its own initiative or at the behest of the client, provided in so doing it does not seek to persuade the client to break any existing contract or detract from the service of same.
- Cause all its clients to be listed in the Annual Register of PRCAN. Cause all its Directors, Executives and Retained Consultants who hold Public Office, as members of National and State Assemblies, and members of Local Government or any statutory organization or body, to be recorded in the relevant sections of the Annual Register of PRCAN.
- Not engage in any practice, which tends to corrupt the integrity of channels of public communication or legislation.

- Not propose to clients any action that would constitute an improper influence on organs of government or legislation.

- Not intentionally disseminate false or misleading information, and is under obligation to use reasonable care to avoid dissemination of false or misleading information.

- Only represent competing interests with the consent of all those concerned.

- Inform a client of any shareholding or financial interest held by that firm in any company, firm or person whose services it recommends.

- Negotiate, propose or agree terms with client based on the resources that can reasonably be expected to apply. Be free to accept fees, commissions or other valuable considerations from persons other than a client, in connection with services for that client, provided such considerations is disclosed to the client.

- Not support to serve some announced cause while actually serving an undisclosed special or private interest. Not offer to give or cause a client to offer or give any inducement to such persons as described in Article 4 above who are not Directors, Executives or Retained Consultants with intent to further the interests of the member or of the client if such action is inconsistent with the public interest.
- Not engage in any practice and not to

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN PUBLIC RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

PRCAN: CODE OF CONSULTANCY PRACTICE

CODE OF ETHICS OF NIPR

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

be seen to conduct itself in any manner detrimental to the interest of Public Relations Consultancy.

- Safeguard the confidence of both present and former clients and shall not disclose or use these confidences to the disadvantages or prejudice of such clients or the financial advantage of the member firm.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

Member firms of Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria base their professional principles on the fundamental value and dignity of the individual; holding that free exercise of human rights, especially freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of the press are essential to the practice of public relations.

In serving the interest of clients, we dedicate ourselves to the goals of better communication, understanding and cooperation among the diverse individuals, groups and institutions of society.



PRCAN Pledge

We hereby pledge to:

- Conduct ourselves professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness and responsibility to the public.
- Improve our individual competences and advance the knowledge and proficiency of the profession through continuing research, education, and consultancy.
- To adhere to the Articles of Code of Professional Standards for the practice of Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria.



CODE OF ETHICS OF NIPR

Professionals in Nigeria belong not only to some international professional bodies optionally, they also belong compulsorily to the local professional body known as the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), one of the few in the world backed by a state statutory instrument in Decree 16 of 1990.

The institute's codes of practice have 12 articles which include the following:

Every member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations shall:

- a.** respect the moral principles of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and the freedoms entrenched in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the performance of his/her own duties;
- b.** recognise that each person has the right to reach his own judgement by himself;

- c.** respect the right of parties in a dispute to explain their respective points of view;
- d.** encourage the free circulation of public information and preserve the integrity of channels of communication;
- e.** put trust and honesty of purpose before all other considerations;
- f.** safeguard the confidences of his present/previous employers or clients;
- g.** represent interests which are not in conflict;
- h.** refuse to enter into any agreement which requires the attainment of certain results before the payment of professional fees;
- i.** protect the professional reputation or practice of another member, but make it his duty to report unethical behaviour on the part of any member of the institute;



j. not seek to displace any other member with his employer or client, except with the mutual agreement of all the parties concerned;

k. Not operate any front organisation;

l. Co-operate with any other members in upholding and enforcing this code.

These articles are a superb adaptation of some international codes and the British codes of ethics to suit the Nigerian institution. The extraordinary general meeting of the institute held at the Bristol Hotel in Lagos on January 30, 1981 approved the Nigerian codes.



It should however, be noted that even with the legislative force of certification, equated with licensing, ethical practice is still a function of individual behaviour.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ETHICS

No profession can succeed until backed by a code of ethics, and the public relations profession is no

exception. The words 'ethics' means a system of moral principles governing the appropriate conducts of a person or a group. It includes many components, one of which is behaviour.

It implies behaviour, personal or organizational, which must comply with certain standards.

There are hardly two opinions about behaviour being ethical, but the subject becomes debatable as to, which behaviour is ethical and, which is not. Disagreement sets in when we begin to specify those ethical standards. Different people set different standards.

These standards depend on the values and norms held by the people concerned. Since they differ from one person to the next, standards of behaviour also differ.

In the corporate and industrial world, it is generally agreed that the minimum standard for behaviour is that the laws of the country or state should be observed. Laws, however, are a reflection of the norms, values, beliefs, as well as the political system of a country. These vary from country to country.

Among such values, truth and justice are of prime importance. Besides, both these

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DR TYOTOM KEGHKU, FNIPR, arpa

INTRODUCTION

Legal and ethical issues are closely related in public relations practice, however they are not identical. Even when no violation of the law can be proven a practitioner can be sanctioned for unethical conduct under the Public Relations Society of America.

Ethics are seen as moral issues that border on right and wrong, good and bad. Ethics could also be referred to as morals and principles and beliefs concerning right and wrong behaviour; virtue and vice.

Ethical Questions often arise in professional relationships with colleagues, clients, employers, news media, other professional bodies, financial analysts, and others. Increased professionalization is however, one possible answer to questions raised regarding ethical practice.

values represent universally acceptable principle, which have a special relevance to the field of Public relations.

SOME LEGAL ASPECTS

Most of the ethical standards are not mandatory in nature and are expected to be accepted on a voluntary basis by members of a society. Despite several social controls that the society imposes on its members to follow, there is never a situation when people follow the ethical code put forth by a society.

The situation calls for the formation of certain laws, which have the sanction of government and made mandatory to be obeyed by all citizens, and flouting of which warrants certain punishments.

It is, therefore, important that Public relations professionals have a thorough understanding of the country's laws, especially those laws which apply to the information area.

The laws that govern information dissemination, which is the prime responsibility of Public relations practitioners are: libel, slander, defamation, copy right act, intellectual property rights, and privacy rights.

LIBEL

It tantamounts to libel when an untruthful statement about a person, published in writing or through broadcast media, injures the person's reputation or standing in the community. As libel is a tort (a civil wrong), the injured person can bring a lawsuit against the person who made the false statement.

Libel is a form of defamation, as is slander (an untruthful statement that is spoken, but not published in writing or broadcast

through the media).

The law recognizes in every man a right to have the estimation in which they stand in the opinion of others, unaffected by false statements, to their credit. Any discouragement of a person's good name is a wrongful act, and in Nigeria, the remedy is available to the aggrieved person in a civil action under the common law or criminal proceedings for defamation.

In a civil action, the claim is one essentially for damages by monetary compensation for the wrong done namely injury to character. In criminal proceedings, vindication of the grievance of the complainant is punishment with fine and / or imprisonment.

SLANDER

A slander is a type of defamation. Slander is an untruthful oral (spoken) statement about a person that harms the person's reputation or standing in the community.

As slander is a tort (a civil wrong), the injured person can bring a lawsuit against the person, who made such a false statement. If the statement is made via broadcast media, for example over the radio or on television, it is considered libel, rather than slander.

ETHICAL CODES

Ethical behaviour goes beyond just observance of the law. Observing the law, in letter and spirit, warrants the minimum required behaviour.

Therefore, a voluntary discipline called a 'code of conduct' has been devised by Public relations practitioners and other professionals for themselves. Such codes, because they are based on actual practice and are devised by people professionally



operating in that area, become relevant and acceptable.

Some common principles can be found in most codes of professional conduct and they apply to most professions. One general principle applicable to all professions is that there should be no conflict of interests. This means no client, who is in an adversary or competitive role to another, should be contracted.

Public relations practitioners should also not have any vested interest in the activity that they undertake. This principle also states that one's own interests should be disclosed fully to stay clear of any complication. If the practitioners stand to gain commercially from a certain course of action that they recommend, then they should disclose their interests fully. Transparency is the bottom line of professional ethics.

As many provisions of the codes deal with information, it is advisable not to knowingly or recklessly disseminate false or misleading information, and even avoid doing so inadvertently. Information should not be used or divulged without the express consent of the client or employer. Any form of action, which would tend to corrupt the integrity of the media communication, must be avoided.

Codes are also formulated by several specialized groups amongst members. More attention is paid to the requirements of its own members. Despite attempts to be as comprehensive as possible, codes can never be complete. There is also no compulsion in observing them.

Yet, the moral force behind these principles make the members believe in the codes and also find it advantageous to follow.

Non-observance of these codes may attract penalty, though not legal, yet by peer censure, which may hamper or lower the reputation of a professional amongst his colleagues, friends, and competitors in the same vocation.

No other mechanism of enforcement may be necessary if the code is respected and adhered to by all. The observance of ethics goes to enhance the professional reputation of its members. By fostering spirit of ethics, there emerges an ethical relationship amongst the members of the association and the publics.

A code of ethics, when accepted voluntarily, serves as a professional benchmark by which one's colleagues can be measured. It provides strength and justification to those who insist on doing only what the code of conduct advocates.

Contrary to the general comment that 'Everything is fair in business and love', the observance of moral code leads to emergence of an image which is invaluable in business. Public relations practitioners are particularly mindful of this professional fact of life. Several global companies fanatically guarding their policies and practices the world over, testify this value system.

THE CHALLENGE OF ETHICAL PRACTICE

Ethics is an area of particular concern for public relations for three reasons:

1. Practitioners are aware that to some, public relations has a reputation for unethical behaviour;
2. Public relations is often the source of ethical statements from an organization and the repository of ethical and social policies;
3. Practitioners have struggled to create a suitable code of ethics for themselves, Public relations practice is based on a function of trust. Members of the profession who violate that trust harm their colleagues as much as themselves.

Like any other group or profession, public relations has ethical as well as unethical practitioners. However, since public relations as a profession attempts to represent the public as well as the organization in business decision making, its practitioners are frequently held to a higher standard.

The media and various publics will quickly point out deception in what might be considered normal behaviour for members of other competitive businesses.

INDIVIDUAL ETHICS

At the heart of any discussion of ethics in public relations are some deeply troubling questions for the individual practitioners. Some examples include: Will he or she:

1. Lie for a client or employer?
2. Engage in deception to collect information about another practitioner's clients?

3. Help conceal a hazardous condition or an illegal act?
4. Provide information that presents only part of the truth?
5. Offer something (gift, travel, or information) to reporters or legislators that may compromise them?
6. Present true but misleading information in an interview or news conference that will mask some unpleasant fact.

Many public relations practitioners find themselves forced to respond to questions like these. Even though most report that they are seldom pressed to compromise their values, the questions are still asked.

By conscientiously considering their ethical standards, practitioners can avoid difficult and embarrassing situations.



Maintaining ethical standards is the key to establishing trust relationships with employees, employers, clients, media contacts, and others.

Because of the importance of ethical behaviour to the general practice of public relations, attempts have been made to improve sanctions against individuals who violate professional standards.

Coincidentally, whereas the PRSA has a 14 point Code of Ethics, the NIPR has a 12 point code which was adopted on January 30, 1981 and this code is entrenched in Section 3 Subsection V of the NIPR Constitution. This was prior to the promulgation of Decree 16 of the 1990 now Act of the National Assembly.

ETHICAL DEALINGS WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Perhaps the most critical relationship to be managed by public relations practitioners are those with the news media, here, anything less than total honesty will destroy credibility and with it, the practitioners usefulness to an employer or client. All news media depend upon public relations sources for much of the information they convey to viewers, readers, and listeners.

Although, public relations releases are sometimes used simple as leads from which to develop stories, at other times, reporters and editors rely upon the accuracy and thoroughness of public relations copy and use it with little change.

Trust is the foundation of all public relations practice and can be achieved only through ethical performance. Therefore, providing junkets for the press that have doubtful news value, throwing extravagant parties, giving expensive gifts, and doing personal favours will ultimately destroy a practitioner's effectiveness.

Even if journalists ask for favours, the ethical public relations professional must find a way to tactfully decline. In the long run, establishing a reputation for honesty and integrity will yield dividends in media relations.

Although several studies have consistently shown that public relations practitioners and journalists have similar professional values and make similar news judgments, the same studies show that journalists strongly believe public relations practitioners do not have professional values. The unwillingness of the few practitioners to uphold ethical standards could be the reason these misconceptions persist.

ETHICS AND LAWS

While ethical and legal issues frequently evolve from similar circumstances, the public relations professional must understand the differences. Keeping to the letter of the law does not guarantee ethical action. Many unethical claims and promotions have been structured to stay within the legal limits, even though their intent was to trick or deceive someone. While an understanding of the law is important, a professional must rely on a higher standard for decision making.

Public relations practitioners working for publicly held companies have both an ethical and a legal obligation to promptly release news about dividends, earnings, new products, mergers, and other developments that might affect the value of securities. A delay in releasing such news could allow insiders to derive unfair financial benefits.

The Securities and Exchange Commission and the individual stock exchanges strictly enforce these regulations.

SUMMARY

Ethical questions arise frequently for public relations professionals during the course of their daily business with clients, the media, and others. In addition, practitioners are often called upon to be the source of ethical statements on behalf of the organizations they represent. Thus, public relations professionals are especially sensitive to any suggestion of misconduct. To encourage commitment to ethical standards, both PRSA and NIPR among others have established codes for ethical behaviour, and PRSA has set up an enforcement procedure as well.

Some believe that practitioners would be further influenced to abide by ethical standards if they were required to become legally certified, but licensure is still a controversial issue and has not been implemented. Codes, policies, and laws alone cannot achieve ethical standards; the ultimate responsibility lies with each individual practitioner.

CASE STUDIES

Sometimes, in everyday practice, situations arise where the proper thing, the ethical thing, even the legal thing to do is not always immediately clear. Following are several such situations.

1. A well-known athlete is charged with selling drugs and planning and carrying out, with others, the death of a young married couple. His attorney calls you a close friend, to advise and assist him in handling the intense media interest in the case. During the period before trial, you learnt that the athlete was, in fact, a drug dealer and did participate in the murder. The lawyer tells you that the information is privileged. You decide to await the outcome of the trial. The lawyer is able to get his client acquitted. What should you do?

2. Your firm is one of six under consideration by a manufacturer planning to introduce a new service into your area. You are given confidential information as to the service and the plans of the company. You are aware that the company will face severe opposition from certain groups and politicians, and that the job will entail overcoming this resistance. Your firm is turned down by the company and the assignment is given to a competitor. Can you disclose the information you have learned to the manufacturer's opposition in your area?

3. Your public relations firm publishes a newsletter directed to brokerage houses. A corporate executive asks your help in making his company better known among the brokerage community. A subsequent issue of the newsletter carries a highly optimistic forecast of the company but omits some information. Nothing in the story indicates any relationship, between you and the company. Were you under any obligation to disclose this relationship, and should you print a retraction?

4. You are a corporate public relations director. Your employer tells you to set up a supposedly independent organization to introduce and promote the use of a new product made by your company. This new organization is to be financed secretly by your company and some of its suppliers. Is there anything wrong with establishing this organization?

5. A distributor of medicinal products arranges with your firm to put on a press conference for an independent scientist who has tested the products and written favourably about them. You also arrange speaking engagements for the visiting scientist. After the press conference, you learnt that the scientist was actually an employee of the research arm of the manufacturer of the products. What actions should you take?

6. A client asks you for help in a financial merger situation. You decline because the matter is outside your expertise, and refer the company to a fellow practitioner who is knowledgeable in financial affairs. The fellow practitioner is so appreciative, he sends you a cheque for N5 million. Can you accept the money without telling the client?

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EXPLAINING PR'S BARCELONA PRINCIPLES

We can measure the distance of the Milky Way. We can determine the size of an electron. But can we calculate the impact of public relations?

Maybe. Unlike physics or astronomy, it's not an exact science. And if you thought the debate on gun control and the Second Amendment was contentious, welcome to public relations. Measurement matters because in a very competitive marketplace for clients, dollars, internal resources and respect, the industry wants to justify its contributions and impact.

Like charm, reputation or leadership, public relations can be a subjective science. You know when you see it or feel it, but people can't always quantify every single sales lead, jump in revenue, rise in rankings, gain or loss of market share and link that to a single article in the Wall Street Journal, a fantastic speech at TED or Davos, Switzerland, or a series of Tweets.

There are three main opinions about metrics. The first comes from small agencies or individuals who claim they are the master alchemist. They are the ultimate expert, and only their equation is the truth.

The second opinion, with possibly the most members, are followers of the Barcelona Principles, a document created by a large committee of well-meaning PR pros that establishes broad guidelines. The second group believes this is the Bible.

The backbone of this theory are seven guidelines that are quite expansive. Narrowing down the inputs and outcomes for all or part of these principles into

usable equations and statistics can be very complicated, and in some cases, expensive.

Here's the 2015 update on the seven principles:

- 1.** Goal Setting and Measurement are Fundamental to Communication and Public Relations
- 2.** Measuring Communication Outcomes is Recommended Versus Only Measuring Outputs
- 3.** The Effect on Organizational Performance Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible
- 4.** Measurement and Evaluation Require Both Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
- 5.** AVEs are not the Value of Communication
- 6.** Social Media Can and Should be Measured Consistently with Other Media Channels
- 7.** Measurement and Evaluation Should be Transparent, Consistent and Valid

I'm in the third group. A few months ago I wrote an e-book for Meltwater, "Estimating the Real Value of Public Relations," where I introduced a simple measurement that anyone can do for a single media placement. $PR\ Dollar\ Value = Advertising\ Equivalency\ (AVE) \times Multiplier\ of\ 5$. This was based, in part, on a six-year study of 72,000 readers of the Los Angeles Times.

The multi-million-dollar research study, which surveyed 12,000 readers in seven different categories every week annually for six years, determined editorial content was much more valuable than

MEASUREMENT IN PR

EXPLAINING PR'S BARCELONA PRINCIPLES

HOW THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES HAVE BEEN UPDATED

advertisements in terms of awareness, recall and attitudinal impact. The multiplier comes from previous studies with multipliers ranging from 2.5 to 8.0 along with discussions from the author of the LA Times comprehensive project.

Besides that major research, and similar less comprehensive ones, there are three reasons to use AVE. User Experience, Buyer Experience, and The Real World. In a newspaper or magazine, or on the Internet, TV or radio, you cannot divorce the experience of ads and editorial. They are seen or watched or listened to side-by-side. To claim otherwise is simply not realistic.

Second, each day businesses large and small decide how to spend their marketing budgets and resources: advertising, public relations, social media, billboards, events, etc. Its already being compared – every day. Third reason, reality. Advertising is a multi-billion business. Look at the Super Bowl. Google Ads. What do PR people want to compare editorial to smoke signals? Olive oil? The foam in their skinny mocha lattes?

Reasonable people can disagree. The adherents of the Barcelona Principles do not use AVE. That's fine. Although we disagree on AVE, there's a lot of good information – and good intentions – contained in The Barcelona Principles. They deserve serious scrutiny. The document comes from very smart people who want to increase the reputation of the PR industry.

To find out more, I spent interviewed the main author, David Rockland, Ketchum Partner, Immediate Past Chairman, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, via email. Here's what Rockland had to say.

Robert Wynne: Can you measure PR?

David Rockland: Yes. You measure PR by answering one or more of the following questions:

Outputs: Did you reach or engage your target audience with the messages or content you intended?

Outcomes: As a result of reaching or engaging that audience, did they change in the sense of their awareness, comprehension, attitude, behaviour and/ or advocacy?

Organizational Results: What were the effects on the organizations as a result of the changes in the audience, often measured in sales, market share, employee engagement, advocacy, donations, etc.

Wynne: If so, how can you measure PR using the Barcelona Principles?

Rockland:The Barcelona Principles provide the framework for communications measurement and are not specific tools or formulas. However, by applying them, you wind up with a solid measurement program for communications. Within each Principle, there are pretty specific directions in terms of how to write measureable goals and then the techniques you apply for each type of measurement, including what are the best ways to apply those techniques.

The Principles reflect the fact that communications take many different form, and the Principles guide you in terms of how to measure each form. However, I know many companies and other types of organizations from Southwest Airlines to Cleveland Clinic to the UK government, who use the Principles as the basis for their communications measurement.

Wynne: Is this expensive, do you need to hire a big PR agency, or can you do it yourself?

Rockland: It really depends on the communications program and its goals. Someone can use the Principles

themselves to derive the approach. In many ways, it begins with coming up with good goals at the outset, and then the measurement program is pretty well delineated. Obviously, there are efficiencies in involving a firm or professional who does this kind of work a lot.

However, that may not always be necessary. A reasonable consideration is to spend 3-7% of the total budget on the goal-setting and measurement, but make sure you are using the measurement to not only determine how you did, but also to better the communications effort moving forward in a predictable fashion.

Wynne: Were the principles created by a team of 200 people? In other words, was this a document created by consensus?

Rockland: The initial Principles in 2010 were created by around 25 people, edited by me and then voted into existence by around 250 people from around 35 countries at a conference in Barcelona.

They were then adopted by many companies, associations, etc. In the 2015 update, I convened people from a broader array of organizations -- government, academia, corporations, non-profit and trade/membership organizations -- to

get their input and perspective. In some cases, the various organizations solicited input from their members. So, in this latest iteration, there were probably as many as 200 people involved.

However, at the end of the day, in 2010 and 2015, the Principles were written on my computer and do reflect my perspective on bringing together the viewpoints and experience of many people who are engaged in the communications profession in many different ways. Fortunately, when they were unveiled both times, everyone involved agreed with them and use them in their organizations.

And the discussion continues ...

Robert Wynne owns a public relations and events agency in Redondo Beach, CA. He is the author of the Amazon bestselling book, "Straight Talk About Public Relations."



HOW THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES HAVE BEEN UPDATED

Changes from the original Barcelona Principles 2010 to the Barcelona Principles 2015

Principle 1:

From: Importance of Goal Setting and Measurement

To: Goal Setting and Measurement are Fundamental to Communication and Public Relations

While the Barcelona Principles were intended to provide a foundation for PR programs, the updated Principles recognize that they can also be applied to the larger communication function of any organization, government, company or brand globally. In fact, measurement, evaluation and goal-setting should be holistic across media and paid, earned, owned and shared channels.

Principle 2:

From: Measuring the Effect on Outcomes is Preferred to Measuring Outputs

To: Measuring Communication Outcomes is Recommended Versus Only Measuring Outputs

The updated Principle is more encompassing of the role of qualitative methods. While the original Principle stated quantitative methods of measuring outcomes were “often preferable,” the updated Principle recognizes that the use of qualitative methods (along with quantitative) should be used as appropriate. The updated Principle also specifically calls out advocacy as an outcome that can (and should) be

measured.

Principle 3:

From: The Effect on Business Results Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible

To: The Effect on Organizational Performance Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible

The updated Principle emphasizes that communications impact more than just business results; rather communications can impact the overall performance of an organization. To do this, organizations must have, and practitioners must understand, integrated marketing and communication models. The PR channel does not exist in a silo, nor should PR measures.

Principle 4:

From: Media Measurement Requires Quantity and Quality

To: Measurement and Evaluation Require Both Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

The updated Principle recognizes that qualitative measures are often needed in order to explain “the why” behind the quantitative outcomes. In addition, the updated Principle reminds practitioners that to be truly objective, we need focus on measuring performance (be it positive, negative or neutral), and avoid making assumptions that results will always be positive or “successful.”

Principle 5:

From: AVEs are not the Value of Public Relations

To: AVEs are not the Value of Communications.

The updated Principle continues

to underline that Advertising Value Equivalents (AVEs) measure the cost of media space or time and do not measure the value of PR or communication, media content, earned media, etc.

Principle 6:

From: Social Media Can and Should be Measured

To: Social Media Can and Should be Measured Consistently with Other Media Channels

The updated Principle recognizes that social media measurement tools have evolved to a point where there is greater potential for consistent measurement on engagement, along with quantity and quality.

Principle 7:

From: Transparency and Replicability are Paramount to Sound Measurement

To: Measurement and Evaluation Should be Transparent, Consistent and Valid

In the spirit of integrity, honesty and openness, the updated Principle includes more specific guidance valid quantitative and qualitative methods in an effort to ensure quantitative methods are reliable and replicable and qualitative methods are trustworthy.

About AMEC

AMEC is the world's largest trade body representing communications research, measurement and insights. AMEC has over 140 members in 40 countries, including media intelligence companies, global PR Groups, Government departments and Non-Profit organisations.



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Agencies without the PRCAN superscript are either not yet registered members or are still in the process of finalizing membership.

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ABOUT BHM RESEARCH & INTELLIGENCE

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