

Five bad PR habits to break in 2015

 By [Monica Braganca](#)

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As most people start heading back to work and new year resolutions kick into gear, it is a great time to shake off those bad PR habits that started rearing their ugly heads over the past year.

1. Thinking that your PR campaign can thrive on a press release alone

Many PR old-timers are still dependent on a uni-channel solution - the press release - to create awareness for their clients. Campaigns that start conversations are integrated and make use of multiple platforms and tactics to reach their desired audience. Press releases are still far from dead, but they are merely one way to tell a story and are often just the content base. Infographics, videos etc. are all important value-adds that will accelerate how far and wide your story is shared.

2. Not listening, watching and reading the media you are targeting

2014 was notable for the amount of media naming-and-shaming of inept PR practitioners. If the PR plan calls for editorial coverage as a tactic, then the PR consultant should be able to demonstrate some familiarity with the kind of content suited to the media being targeted. This, after all, is how mutual respect between PR and media starts to develop. If you are preparing a campaign for your client and you have no grasp of which media you should be talking to and how to work with them, then you are likely to short-change any possible result for your client, not to mention muddying your own reputation.

There is no excuse let alone justification for sending irrelevant content to media. This knowledge is the heart of our industry and what positions us as consultants. Building up this knowledge requires not only ongoing listening, watching and reading, but also effort and time to reach out to our targeted media and ensure that a relationship is established.

3. Taking LinkedIn for granted

In 2014 I rekindled the flame with LinkedIn for a few reasons - firstly, it is a great tool for finding quality talent in our industry and secondly, businesses are actively using LinkedIn now to do their own research when looking for a new agency or consultants. It is becoming increasingly important to update both personal and company profiles, and to share content as well. LinkedIn is a remarkable marketing platform for building business and personal brands, and therefore requires as much attention as your Facebook and Twitter accounts.

4. Over-complicating the planning

Planning is an integral step for any successful campaign, but often we try to add so much detail into our plans that we end up over-complicating things and losing sight of where we are headed and where we need to be. In their time-pressured working environments, clients prefer plans that are kept simple and to the point, listing our goals (what do we want to do?), tactical approach (how are we going to do it?) and measurement (how will we know if we succeeded?)

5. Using outdated measurements

Here's an early prediction for 2016 - the debate around what should be measured for PR success will continue to run, and for a long time to come. There are a number of different ways to measure a campaign's success and it is up to us as PR consultants, to ensure our clients understand all possible tools and that we align our benchmarks with theirs. Share of voice, tonality, level of engagement, message penetration and qualitative tiering, for example, are just some of the yardsticks available for us to track and in turn provide our clients with a more concise and higher level of reporting.

When we are watching the correct dials, we become more agile in the way we work and adapt, and we also start providing a more tangible value to our clients' businesses. And that should be the #1 intention for 2015.

ABOUT MONICA BRAGANCA

PR Business Unit Director at Clockwork Media
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