



# **White Paper**

## ***The New PR: What Is It and What's In It for Me?***

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## The New PR: What Is It and What's In It for Me?

### Seven Key Points Explaining the New PR

1. The traditional approach to PR and marketing focuses on getting information to prospects and stakeholders through intermediaries - buying ads, placing stories via the media. The goal was to get people to stop, look/listen to your message, and then act. In contrast, the new, digitally driven PR goes directly to prospects, on the Internet, at the time when they are researching a topic and preparing to make their buying decision. The new PR links awareness and sales, building the relationship with the customer that convinces them, or predisposes them, to choose you. As David Meerman Scott in his highly readable book "The New Rules of Marketing and PR," the Web "delivers useful content at just the precise moment that a buyer needs it."
2. The new PR works for B2B as well as B2C services. The success stories so far are primarily B2C, because that is where the first deployment of these strategies occurred. However, business executives looking for vendors or partners have the same shopping patterns. They will go online either to look for resources, or go online to check out a resource that has been recommended to them. Consequently, a company's web presence plays an important part in the "credibility quotient" that makes a favorable impression.

Online and social media content increasingly drives B2B media relations. Journalists are early adapters of using the Internet as an information resources, including visiting and writing blogs. Today a journalist doesn't wait for a call about a story, or phone a "contact" when an assignment is made. He or she hits the net, most likely focusing on these companies and resources that are featured prominently in search pages, and that provide intelligent, informative, and easy-to-read content. Those companies and individuals that will be contacted are those that position themselves as experts online.

3. PR online and in social media reaches consumers while they are in the research mode, influencing them, developing a consultative relationship, and leading to the direct contact that leads to sales. Customers today know when they are being sold. They want more control over the process, to do their own research and then approach a company that they have pre-qualified. Companies that want to be on the receiving side of their inquiries will be the ones who impress them with accessible, meaningful content that they can read online at their leisure while in the research process.
4. As early adaptors, journalists today get their sources for stories from information online. They post their own blogs, read blogs, find subject matter content online, receive RSS feeds and visit company websites and their online newsrooms. Companies that have not positioned themselves as subject matter experts in these avenues, lose out to those that have.
5. News releases are no longer written for the news media. News releases communicate directly with potential customers and stakeholders who see the releases in the online newsletters they receive and get them by "Googling" subjects and companies of interest to them. The new media has turned news release into a "direct to consumer" communications tactic.

Rather than writing stories from releases (because this information is no longer specifically for media and is universally available), media want exclusive stories tailored to them, and want content on the Web that's available to them when they are researching a topic. Companies that provide this content are the ones who are interviewed.

6. To be successful in leveraging the value of the new PR, think like a publisher. Creating and publishing content online is how companies stand out and get noticed in a credible way. Content can be information on the website that is continually refreshed, online bulletins, blogs, executive forums, releases sent through Internet services, contributions to other websites, online newsletters, postings of articles that cover the company and even postings on other blogs.
7. Organic SEO (search engine optimization) is heavily driven by content. When a prospect begins a shopping search, their eyes seldom travel beyond the first ten entries that come up under the search term. Getting one of these coveted positions depends in large part on how a company uses online content, keywords, and links to rise to the top. Improving SEO is an important goal and benefit of maximizing online PR with online publication.

### Combining the Tradition and the New PR

How does the "new PR" impact the traditional approach, and vice versa? Here's a comparison of the traditional approach to PR to the new PR. Many tactics are similar; the differences lie primary in how information is packaged and distributed. The goal is not to replace the traditional approach, but to modify and add the digital components to it.

The Evolution of PR	
Traditional PR	New PR
Write thought leader articles for media	Publish thought leader materials online - blogs, article surveys, podcasts.
Write news releases for media	Write news releases for potential customers; drive online traffic to site. Include not just company news but "how to," "Ten tips," observations on trends and marketplace developments of interest to customers. In short, take a more feature-ish approach to releases. Issue them more often.
Sell your product though ads and media coverage	Create content that both generates awareness and informs your potential customer. Then, get it online in the places that customers consult for information to build the informational link that leads to sales.

Target reporters and journalists	Target bloggers, online writers, and blogs of journalists, speakers, analysts and other opinion leaders. Capture “share of discussion” with this expanded visibility and raise SEO.
Separate marketing and PR	Marketing and PR blend online.
Find media your targets read	Define “buyer personas” and write for them online.
Post written copy, with an occasional image, to the website	Create a video that can be viewed on the site, posted in social networking sites, and spread virally
Send communication unilaterally to the recipient	Start and participate in “the conversation” in online communities and sites
The call to action is: For more information call or e-mail	The call to action is: How to be an activist/share your experiences.

To reiterate, it’s not a matter of throwing out the traditional and only pursuing the new approach. Companies should do both. Here’s a hypothetical example:

Topic xxx is a newsworthy topic that supports your company’s business goals and messaging. We would use traditional PR to:

- Potentially, do a news release.
- Pitch media on interviews on this topic.
- Write bylined thought leader articles for media.
- Obtain speaking engagements on the topic.
- Arrange media coverage around these speaking events.

We would use the new PR approach to:

- Structure any potential release for search engine optimization and online visibility.
- Post selected articles and interviews on the website so that visitors see them.
- Self-publish bulletins or articles on the topic; circulate them to journalists, opinion leaders, etc. and make available through the website (“for an article on xxx, register here” to find out who’s downloading it, or just post it).
- Write about the topic in company blogs and appropriate sections on the company website.
- Comment on other posts and blogs that address this topic.
- Connect with journalists and opinion leaders covering this topic through their blogs.
- Approach other websites where your targets go to post content and create links.
- Post speeches as podcasts on the website.
- Potentially, create a short video for online posting and circulating online.

In conclusion, online communication and social media has opened multiple channels for companies to tap

for marketing and public relations. These online channels reach prospects directly, when their interest is already present and they are open to forming a relationship with a company or organization that demonstrates their expertise and accessibility. Strategic online publishing drives search engine optimization, attracts these interested individuals, and establishes the relationship that leads to the sale. Digital communication does not replace traditional marketing and public relations; instead they work in tandem to exponentially multiply the effectiveness of your efforts.

### What Should I Do?

1. Look at your website as a television channel to be programmed all year long. Plan the content and how it will be posted and distributed just as you plan your annual marketing campaigns.
2. Set up a publishing schedule for your own content. Develop a year's plan for the bulletins, releases, white papers, blog postings that you want to publish throughout the year. Your published products should be interesting to the reader, and provide value - new insights, information, and practical advice. They support your USP but are not promotional in nature.
3. Evaluate each announcement or pronouncement for multiple uses for multiple audiences. Turn the speech into an article, a bulletin, a release, a podcast.
4. Think visual. Video is the language of the Internet today. Pictures still communicate more than a thousand words.
5. Find ways to "start the conversation." Seed the Internet ground with provocative, insightful content in places where people can respond. When they do, respond back!
6. Yes, it's a new world. The rewards for exercising the brain cells and learning to thinking in different, creative ways are great: higher ROI, less labor intensive, and more powerful and productive campaigns.

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