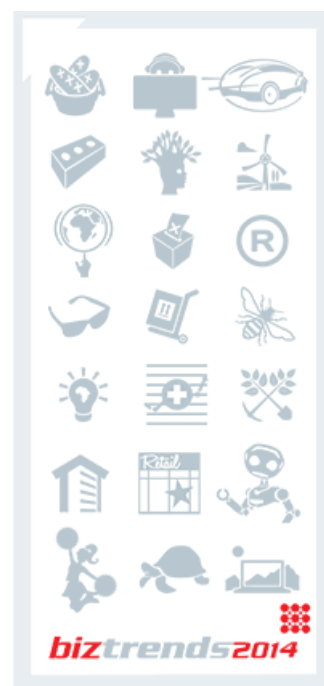




In many ways the social media revolution has not escaped this thinking and many communicators still consider chasing higher numbers of Facebook fans or Twitter followers as a measure of success. Many forget that 50 fans who are actively engaged with your brand and act as brand ambassadors are far more important than 50,000 followers who never interact with the brand again.

Not to say that that the end is nigh for traditional media - traditional is transforming and many new opportunities arise such as social TV where mobiles can interact with televised content or QR codes where even print can be connected to the social sphere. WebDam, based in the US, reported recently that 52% of marketers found a client on Facebook with LinkedIn being responsible for 43% of communicators finding clients. Particularly in the business-to-business sector companies who ran their own blogs and created content increased leads by 67%. Utilising free social media or creating your own media is not only very cost effective versus traditional means but once again it creates the opportunity to have a conversation with the customer directly.

3. Collaborating with the 'enemy'

The storytellers of brands are still very much silo'd. Advertising departments fight their public relations and social media cousins for a bigger slice of the budgetary pie instead of working together to achieve optimal relationships with customers. This, however, is far bigger than just the marketing and communications discipline as front-line employees, receptionists, call centre staff, right through to finance needs to be involved.

As Rockefeller said, doing the right thing is the most important and no amount of PR work will recover a lost relationship through poor customer service. The importance of internal branding and marketing is often overlooked in the exercise of building great customer relations - the emphasis being put on beautiful creative or messages which ultimately may disconnect with the customer experience.

4. "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted" (Albert Einstein)

The USC Annenberg's Generally Accepted Practices (GAP) for Public Relations study found that spending on communication measurement increased from 4% to 9% as part of US PR budgets between 2009 and 2012. This was despite 80% of practitioners indicating that the overall PR budgets remained flat or even decreased. What is clear is that public relations practitioners need to provide better measurement of ROI on their activities.

The use of the traditional but discredited AVE (Advertising Value Equivalent) is thankfully dying on a global scale with only 33% of practitioners still using it as a measurement metric and many unwillingly - according to research by NASDAQ OMX/Ragan Communications. But the race is now on to develop measurement standards that tie communications activities directly to the growth of the business, measurements that look at the outcomes rather than the outputs - did the target market understand and respond to the message?

Global PR organisations are joining forces with measurement giants like AMEC (the international association for the measurement and evaluation of communication) and it will do South African practitioners good to familiarise themselves with the Barcelona Principles of measurement.

In many ways public relations has lost its focus - building relationships with journalists, bloggers, media, "fake" brand ambassadors (the medium) rather than with their real public. Creating a great customer experience is the objective and you will find no better medium than word-of-mouth to spread the brand's story - social media has just amplified the reach of word-of-mouth.

For more:

- Bizcommunity Special Section: [Biz Trends 2014](#)
- Bizcommunity Search: [2014 trends](#)
- Twitter Search: [#biztrends2014](#)



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- #BizTrends2020: Three mega trends that will shape the future of PR and communication - 10 Jan 2020
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