

Social Media changing the face of PR

There is much debate in the global world of communications that the practice of PR as we know it is dead following the rise and rise of social media. I don't agree. Yes, the world is changing and so too is PR. As a practitioner social media opens up another, big world of opportunity to spread the word and I would be crazy not to get with this program.

What social media does is put the public back into public relations. It allows us as communicators, to understand and talk with our markets on street level. Social media really is a supped up way of listening, responding and establishing word-of-mouth.

While I cannot profess to be an expert on the art and craft of social media, I am in my own way, trying to practice what I preach and as a person compelled to spread the word – find vehicles such as Facebook and Twitter the perfect answer. What we need to do as business owners is harness these in a strategic way and link in and inspire our customers, peer-to peer.

Gone are the days of pitching solely to a journalist, now we are also focussing on bloggers, linking in with special interest groups in a media landscape that wants fast, factual and concise information that we can monitor and respond to in a more down-to-earth style of communications. Of course our traditional methods will prevail, but the new online, social media phenomenon is going to be our future.

Not so long ago I would recommend clients establish a website that integrated with their overall marketing campaign and dovetailed with pr. Now the question is....are you on Facebook and if so, how many people like you? What a beautiful way to share information?

How to get started? Harness one of your Gen Y staffers or teenagers and ask them to be in charge of your Facebook. While updating their own, they can also be doing it for the 'boss' – the key is to be consistent with the aim of establishing dynamic, multi-dimensional conversations. And don't be afraid to ask people to 'like' you – and even better, give them an incentive –offers, discounts, t-shirts and free stuff in general seems to work a treat. Good luck!

ends