

3 Reasons Why PR Professionals Need to Adopt New Technologies

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The PR industry is under increasing pressure to innovate, evolve and make better use of data to prove its value. As Gartner's most recent CMO Spend Survey explains: "CMOs must appease the often-skeptical Chief Financial Officer's (CFO's) expectations for return on investment (ROI) to justify future budgetary commitments." Unfortunately, PR has historically relied on soft metrics like impressions and struggled to provide KPIs that line up with marketing expectations and prove a campaign's impact on business objectives. Traditional PR trackers don't paint a full picture of all efforts. Newer technologies are needed to demonstrate the significance of PR impact.

There are three primary reasons why PR needs to embrace new technology to thrive and innovate.

PR tech is business-critical, but its value is often misunderstood

One of the most common complaints about PR is how difficult it is to judge Return on Investment (ROI). Measuring the effectiveness of PR efforts is critical to justifying its cost. CMOs are looking for measurable outcomes and are more interested in earned media coverage or an increase in web traffic than receiving a list of reporters that were pitched with no feedback. PR leaders are faced with increasing demands for accountability. This means processes that can deliver measurable results are of the utmost importance and with digital ROI becoming easier to measure, the need for

accountability continues to grow.

Analytics dashboards and media databases enable PR to not only show results, but also to hold itself accountable. But these solutions don't provide the full story of all of PRs efforts. New technologies such as workflow automation and content management tools, audience engagement platforms and artificial intelligence solutions are just some of the tools that PR needs to embrace to continue to stay relevant.

A similar trend has recently been seen in martech where platforms like Hubspot, Marketo and the Adobe Marketing Cloud have empowered marketing leaders to operationalize campaigns and tactics making marketing more predictable and scientific – while removing the guess work and organizing data into impactful, actionable reports.

PR tech should not require multiple subscriptions, log-ins and features that were bolted together

As marketing and advertising tech has innovated and progressed – PR has been left behind. The legacy technology that's available to PR pros today requires logging in and out of multiple platforms to build, distribute and track campaigns – leaving them to use a combination of manual, flawed and inaccurate processes and gut instinct to report on the success of their work. It has become mission-critical for PR professionals to understand and implement newer technologies that better fit their needs, or risk falling behind.

PR professionals also need to take the time to step back to understand how their efforts impact the overall goals of their clients. For PR pros to truly demonstrate their importance they need access to all of their data (earned, social, user-generated content and wire and newsroom performance) in one place instead of across different platforms. This data will

help them make better informed decisions going forward and allow them to rely less on their gut instincts.

Traditional PR tech is not enough to support the innovation and creativity that industry strives for

PR got its start through traditional tactics like event coordination, crisis communications, reputation management, trade shows, media relations and press release distribution. Now it's all about new tools and technology. With more publications available than ever before and a 24/7 breaking news cycle, it has become harder to secure earned media coverage as the news cycle becomes more difficult to navigate. The right solutions can help communications professionals streamline everyday tasks. However, PR will need to make integrating these tools an important part of their programs if they want to remain competitive in the years to come.

Public relations is ultimately about relationships. Since success in PR is based on the ability to connect with people, help others and manage relationships, many professionals are understandably worried about assigning technology to these tasks. But technology and relationships should not be opposing forces. They should be combined to help make relationships even stronger.



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