

# Four Goals For Your Communications Team In 2018

*Editor's Note: This article first appeared in Forbes.com.*

## What are the goals of communicators in 2018?

Increasing revenue, of course, but what are some of the goals from your communications plan that can lead to that output? At D S Simon Media we look at our own goals each year. We take a look at what is working in our industry and what has been effective for our clients. A key objective for us in 2018 is connecting one-on-one with industry leaders who can grow our business. And, as influencer marketing has taken off, we wanted to increase our own influence. That's why I accepted the opportunity to become president-elect of the Public Relations Society of America, New York Chapter.

This year, we wanted to dig deeper and make our findings more data-driven by learning what other agency professionals are setting their sights on. By sending an e-blast to PR professionals nationwide and asking them to complete a checkbox-style survey, we identified [four key objectives](#) from the answers of more than 100 communications professionals.

Do any of these align with your own agency's goals?

Topping the list is creating awareness for campaigns and initiatives (79%). Next is turning your experts and leaders into influencers (76%); followed by connecting one-on-one with key opinion leaders (KOLs), prospects and partners (52%) and winning the competition at trade shows (22%). We also collected some specific feedback from those taking the survey.

### 1. Creating Awareness For Campaigns And Initiatives

This has been the traditional role of PR and continues to

resonate with 79% of the communicators we surveyed. What's changing? The growing role of video in building credibility and influence in order to gain traction with top outlets.

A common mistake that agencies still make is immediately expecting their clients to be covered by *Forbes*, CNBC and *The Wall Street Journal*. Start by aiming at smaller outlets to help you sharpen your presentation and messages. This initial media coverage can also be leveraged to generate interest from larger media targets. We've found that senior executives featured in satellite media tours generate more coverage than third-party experts. This can be an easily attainable way to create exposure while building your skillset. To make the most of these opportunities, record video with your experts that aligns with your pitch and share this video through your social media channels.

Survey respondent Kevin McLaughlin, managing director of ICR, notes, "Agency leaders who can have meaningful conversations about business operations, financials and sales drivers – and not just accept 'marketing marching orders' – are best positioned to turn publicity into profits for their clients."

"That's what our job is," says Eileen Ziesemer, senior vice president at MSL, "to look at them in terms of how they challenge their own industry, how they can challenge the status quo and how they can be the most impactful in order to really break through."

## **2. Turning Your Leaders Into Influencers**

If 2017 was the year of influencer marketing, then 2018 might be the year of authenticity. Yet, despite the fact that influencer marketing has become a mainstream topic, many brands continue to overlook the most powerful resources they have: their own leaders and experts. However, that's about to change, according to 76% of communicators we surveyed who identified this as a top objective.

“This is why it’s more important than ever for brands to take a thought leader timeout, setting aside a day to gain insight and understanding around the brand’s creator/leader,” says Colleen Kasel, partner at Bridge Street Branding.

Leveraging internal experts saves money compared to hiring third-party spokespeople. It’s also more credible and builds ongoing value for your organization.

### **3. Connecting One-On-One With KOLs, Prospects And Partners**

As the world we live in becomes more virtual and fragmented, 52% of those surveyed said their goal is to connect one-on-one with potential business prospects, partners and media. Video plays a key role in this. It is far easier and more likely to be successful when asking a key prospect if they want to be featured in a thought-leadership video series you are creating than asking them to attend a sales presentation. A key benefit is that the people you engage with will share the content with your branding through their social media sites and be extremely appreciative of this connection.

This approach is among the most successful at turning your communications strategy into a money maker.

### **4. Winning The Competition For Attention At Trade Shows**

Trade shows also present a significant opportunity for gaining attention. As recently as 2015, trade shows contributed [\\$77 billion](#) to the U.S. gross domestic product, according to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research. Given the significant investment required, the question then becomes whether you’re going to get the return on investment you need. Can you provide lasting value beyond the end of the show?

Olga González, former president of PRSA-NY says, “Trade shows provide regular checkpoints throughout the year to come together and discuss innovation, technology, style and where things are heading with both products and consumer interest.”

This goal had the lowest percentage of respondents, at 22%, but if trade shows are a critical part of your marketing strategy, it's among the most important. One key reason is they provide an environment where you can achieve each of these crucial objectives.

Increasingly, sophisticated communicators recognize the importance of a goal-based communications strategy. Focusing on these four objectives can help ensure your communications efforts drive business goals.