

How to Use Hashtags in PR and Marketing – #SocialMedia Tips



If you've ever created a hashtag for your brand, you understand the struggle summed up in this Onion headline: "[2-Hour Meeting Spent Thinking Up Hashtag Absolutely Nobody On Planet Earth Will Ever Use.](#)"

The article may be hilarious, but losing hours to a hashtag – only to have it disappear into the social media mist – isn't.

To relieve some of your #Hashtag Stress, I spoke with Ryan Hansen ([@RPH2004](#)), manager of social media at PR Newswire. He provided his hashtag insight amidst his daily schedule of promoting blog posts, press releases, events and additional content across PR Newswire's social media accounts.

They Are #Relevant In The Right Places

One might be tempted to push aside hashtags and concentrate on other marketing strategies. Ryan advises against that, citing how hashtags are the "filing system" for what is often the chaos of social media. They make topics that are complex or broad-reaching easier to search for and sort through.

"From trending topics to ongoing industry conversations,

hashtags can say a lot in a little package,” Ryan says.

And the best platforms for hashtags? “Twitter and Instagram mostly,” he confirms, adding that LinkedIn isn’t the place for them. And although Facebook will accept hashtags, “I don’t believe they enhance your posts that much. I find it much more effective to tag people, places or pages instead.”

Start #TheConversation On The Right Foot

No one wants to talk with someone who pushes or over-promotes their viewpoint. Similarly, you don’t want hashtags to present your brand’s message in an aggressive way.

Each platform has its own best practices and social customs. For Twitter it is best to keep to only one or two hashtags per Tweet, due to the 140 character limit.

Instagram doesn’t have the same limit – especially with many users adding hashtags in their posts’ comments – but it is important to rein in how many you use.

“You can add up to thirty, but it is not recommended. Do your research and add six to ten really powerful ones,” Ryan recommends.

There’s something else to keep in mind with Instagram: the size of your existing audience. “The more followers you have, the less hashtags you will need.”

In that case, target your hashtags towards the audiences you are most interested in attracting. This reduction does have a limit, though. As Ryan points out, “We aren’t all Kim K who really doesn’t use them at all and still gets 500k likes regularly.”

What if you’ve decided to join a conversation by using a hashtag that’s already out there? That’s great, says Ryan.

“When there is a trending topic relative to what we share on

social, we will absolutely jump into the conversation.”

But be wise about which conversations you join. Make sure you understand the hashtag’s origin and current use. If the hashtag involves slang, consider how it could be misinterpreted by your audience.

Ten minutes of research today can save hours of [PR](#) clean-up tomorrow.



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