

# What Comms Pros Should Expect in the Year of the Dog



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## **Fact vs. Fiction: Marketers and Media Find Common Ground with Big Data**

Media has always defined the context within which marketing works and that context is in flux. The explosive growth of new channels and publishing platforms has fundamentally changed media consumption patterns and threatens to render traditional media models obsolete. And we're only getting started, folks.

As a new generation of innovations, such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT), continue to go mainstream, an ever-expanding ecosystem of traditional and digital media channels will emerge. Think cars, watches, home appliances, pets and even people. These innovations are powering new types of publishers and now, every individual has the capability to be their own publisher/influencer. However, with this capability – and a premium being put on “speed” to be first with content – the line between fact and fiction is being reshaped. The full impact of this evolution is still to be determined, but one look at our last Presidential election or Brexit illustrates the impact of these changes. This tsunami of technological and societal change has resulted in a dramatic and rapid shift in the way marketers work with media. It has forced marketers to rethink traditional media

strategies and broken down existing silos. In the coming year, a higher demand will be placed on a more programmatic, data-driven approach to media investment and execution.

## **The New Marketing and Media World Order Will Explode**



Marketing's response to this shifting media landscape has been an ongoing process. First it was "paid" media with innovations in ad tech. Then came "owned" media with the emergence of marketing automation solutions. Social media quickly followed. But despite all the progress and innovation, marketers still have a HUGE multi-billion dollar blind spot: earned media.

Communications teams at global brands invest billions in earned media programs yet they still rely on dated engagement metrics and what's worse, have not been able to measure its true impact on business revenue. Instead, vanity metrics still reign supreme in PR departments across the world. This makes zero sense. Consumers trust earned media more than any other form of media and trust is more valuable than ever in today's media environment. Why?

Today's media environment is at the mercy of the ever more-empowered customer. Empowered by digital technologies, empowered by today's culture of experimentation and empowered by almost unlimited media choices in a real-time world of Instagram and Twitter where they can access anything, from anyone, instantly and consume it anywhere. The customer is king and the need to understand their influence will be

paramount in the new year.

## **The Media Puzzle Will FINALLY Be Solved**

Lastly, my crystal ball tells me that 2018 is the year that very expensive blind spot of earned media is eliminated. Just as customers are getting more savvy with the plethora of technologies at their disposal, so are marketers who have struck gold with marketing and PR tools they are using to break down the silos between the different types of media to better reach and engage their audiences.

To do this, marketers will turn to new data-driven technologies that will for the first time ever, enable communication professionals to connect earned media content to consumer action and demonstrate the true return on investment. How? By applying data and measurement at the same level as ad tech. This involves marketing tools that leverage the industry's leading media data and audience management providers to track any piece of earned media content as well as audience data about the people consuming that content.

All that said, enabling communications professionals to apply data and measurement at the same level of ad tech is just one part of the puzzle. The game changer for next year will be the ability for marketers to gain a holistic view into the performance and impact of media investments across paid, owned, social and earned channels.

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