

THE SWEET SMELL OF BRAND SUCCESS



Several ingredients go into creating, sustaining and conveying a brand; getting the right mixture is a communications challenge

by Dafydd Phillips

Back in 2002, Harper US published a book with the bombastic title, *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR*. The authors opined that “today, great brands are built with public relations, not advertising”, and although their argument may be touched by hyperbole, the role of communications in sculpting, disseminating, and upholding an organisation’s brand is essential. But defining brand communications in 2011 is a difficult proposition. Is it about engaging with customers? Is it setting out the company’s position on the day’s key issues? Is it promoting the company as an attractive place to work? Corporate branding is rooted in a mixture of image and strategy, cause and effect, expectations and realities. This makes communicating brand

such a complicated – and invigorating – subject to contemplate. These are interesting times for corporate branding.

NEW EXPECTATIONS The new expectation shared by stakeholders of every description is that today’s corporate brand should be the end result of an integration of marketing, communications and corporate social responsibility. When asked to describe her company’s corporate brand, Katarina Ylikorkala, vice president of brand and marketing communications at Finnish oil and energy company Fortum, answered with a mission statement. “Fortum’s mission”, she told me, “is to create energy that improves life for present and future generations, and sustainable solutions are at the core of our operations.” In

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Zurich May 16 | June 6 | September 12 |
October 10 | Stockholm May 12-13 |
Brussels June 30-July 1 | Los Angeles
July 18-28 | Berlin September 15-16

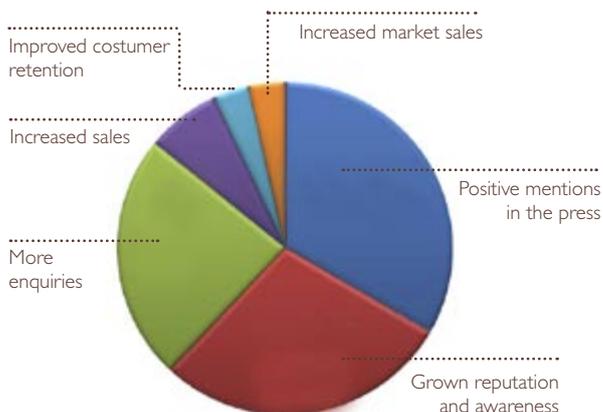
Individual meetings are held throughout Europe.

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FACTS & FIGURES

How do growth companies perceive and use PR agencies? In May this year, Knowledge Peers, in association with Cirkle PR and hanover communications, surveyed growth companies about their experiences of, and attitudes towards, public relations and in particular their relations with agencies. Respondents were predominantly from the not-for-profit sector, business services, media and marketing, technology companies, professional services and education. Approximately half had used a PR agency before. Among the questions, the survey asked respondents to summarise their experiences with their agencies (below left). Media coverage was unsurprisingly the main focus: 79 per cent of those who answered said they had gained trade press coverage, making up 24 per cent of the total response, and 66 per cent had gained wider press coverage, making up 20.3 per cent of the break-

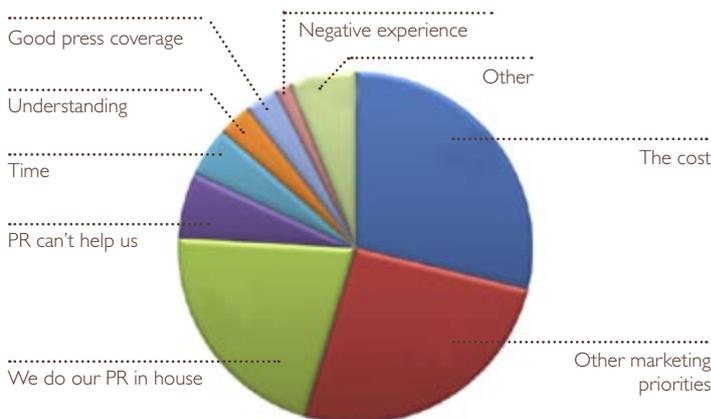
What has your agency done for you?



down of activities. Social media, developing network and arranging events are also important factors of a PR agency's work, and all gained more than 10 per cent of the total response. On the other hand, there were a wide range of reasons for not using a public relations agency (below right). The primary reasons were the cost (28.7 per cent of responses), preferring to spend marketing budgets in other ways (25.7 per cent) and preferring to do their public relations in house (21.2 per cent). Smaller firms were less likely to have used an agency than larger firms, and were more likely to feel that public relations would not help their company. On the whole, having an understanding of what public relations can offer was not an issue, nor was having had a negative experience. *Taken from Knowledge Peers, PR For Growth Companies.*

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Reasons for not using a PR agency



COMMENTARY

Media, politics, and the end of the World

The revelation that the News of The World, the flagship tabloid of Rupert Murdoch's News International empire, hacked into and deleted messages on the voicemail of murdered teenager Milly Dowling – thereby giving false hope to her relatives – opened the floodgates for a deluge of almost unbelievable revelations that have seriously undermined the previously unassailable media institution. Relatives of murder victims and of servicemen killed in Afghanistan were similarly targeted by the paper's hacks. Then came Murdoch's shock decision to close the 168-year old paper, rather than sack the editors. Like many seemingly sudden events, extensive background work lit the fuse of the chain reaction, in this case by the brilliant campaigning journalist Nick Davies. A pioneer in the campaign against the corrosive influence of PR on the media (see Communication Director 02/2008 for our interview with him), his work over the past two years laid the groundwork for the stormy events of this past week, events that will unquestionably result in a redefinition of journalism and the free press in the UK. But breaking news points to another angle:



former Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Prince Charles were also targeted by hackers from News International – the poison reached the country's establishment. On top of that, Prime Minister David Cameron is implicated: his former director of communication was editor of the News of The World during part of the period under focus. Contempt and closeness have been conflicting hallmarks of the relationship between the UK and Rupert Murdoch, the iconoclastic Australian tycoon whose rejection by the school-tie establishment of the black and white years seems to have fuelled his slash and burn approach to the UK, a country his media empire fundamentally shaped over the past decades.

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PERSONNEL



Brigitte Trafford
(Director, Corporate Affairs)
Institution: ICAP
Start: July 11



UK: Trafford moves from Lloyd's to ICAP

Interdealer broker ICAP has appointed BRIGITTE TRAFFORD as director of corporate affairs with global responsibility for all aspects of communications. Trafford's most recent role was as group communications director for Lloyds Banking Group; prior to that she ran her own consultancy. This followed more than three years as group communications director at television group ITV plc, where she was a member of its executive board.



Oliver Renner
(Head, Communications & Public Affairs)
Institution: Bayer HealthCare
Start: July 01



Germany: Renner speaks for Bayer HealthCare

OLIVER RENNEN is the new head of global corporate communications and public affairs at Bayer HealthCare in Berlin. In his new position he is responsible for global product communications, health policy and public affairs, media relations, scientific communications and internal communications. Renner succeeds Markus Pickel, who has left the company, and reports to the Board Chairman of Bayer Healthcare, Joerg Reinhardt.



Britta Blumencron
(Head, Corporate Communications)
Institution: Novartis Start: June 01



Austria: Blumencron joins Novartis Austria

At the beginning of June, BRITTA BLUMENCRON became head of corporate communications & pharmaceuticals for the pharmaceutical company Novartis in Vienna. In this position she is responsible for the communication activities of Novartis Pharmaceuticals and is a corporate spokeswoman for Novartis Austria. She has replaced Birgit Wandrak.

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EVENTS



01.09.2011 Lac Lemman Communications Forum 2011

How can communicators earn a leadership role and be part of the executive team? This forum will bring to bear the latest research and best practices around communication and leadership.

► USI Università della Svizzera italiana/HarbourClub/SRRP

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20.09.2011 Healthcare & Pharmaceutical Comms Congress 2011

This congress will explore the facets of a robust communications strategy attuned to the evolving healthcare environment. Featured speakers include figures from Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca and the Financial Times.

► PR Week, London

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29.09.2011 ICCO Summit 2011

The ICCO Summit pulls together senior practitioners from PR consultancies around the world to explore the issues and trends affecting the industry. Under the banner "PR Takes the Lead: The Industry in 2020", this event looks ahead to what the future may hold.

► ICCO, Sintra, Portugal

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30.09.2011 Digital Communication Awards

Over the last few years, the field of professional communication has experienced a significant change: digital communication has become one of the fastest growing and most innovative sectors. The inaugural Digital Communication Awards celebrates this growth.

► Quadriga University, Berlin

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