

AGENCIES ARE FROM MARS, CLIENTS ARE FROM VENUS

Understanding the differences between agencies and in-house departments can help resolve some – if not all – of their relationship problems.

By Dafydd Phillips



Unverschämt is a wonderful word, one of those uniquely German words that sounds exactly like their meaning: outrageous, impudent, brazen. In April this year, ‘unverschämt’ burnt a hole in Germany’s public relations media, when Thomas Strerath, chief executive officer of public relations firm Ogilvy & Mather in Germany, used the adjective to describe a proposal by Deichmann, the German shoe retail chain and the largest monger of shoes and sportswear in Europe. Deichmann’s crime? To invite 20 agencies to pitch ideas for the chain’s 100-year golden anniversary, all for an honorarium, the paltry size of which prompted the unleashing of ‘unverschämt’. After Strerath called for an agency boycott of Deichmann, the chain hurriedly withdrew their offer. This kind of bruising encounter between agencies and their client companies is far from being unique: this article explores the dynamic between the two sides.

communications at Balkan Star, a leading automotive distributor in Bulgaria. A hard-working but generally easy-going colleague, her patience was severely tested recently by an agency hired to help her company prepare for a major event. Errors and misunderstandings both major and minor – from the scale of remuneration to the timing of a photography appointment – built up steam until, after one particularly vexing run-in, she found herself muttering under her breath that they ought to be thankful she was not their boss. What crisis should he have overcome, what values are important to him, how quickly does he learn, how does he cooperate in a team and how does he operate under pressure? These are some of the questions we have to be able to answer about each candidate. They are at the core of the job profile we need to put together before we start our search.

Such frustrations are part and parcel of the working relationship between an in-house communicator and outside ‘help’. And for the sake of fairness, it should be noted that it cuts both ways: agencies have their own

ANTAGONISTIC ATTITUDES Vanya Babanin heads corporate

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FACTS & FIGURES

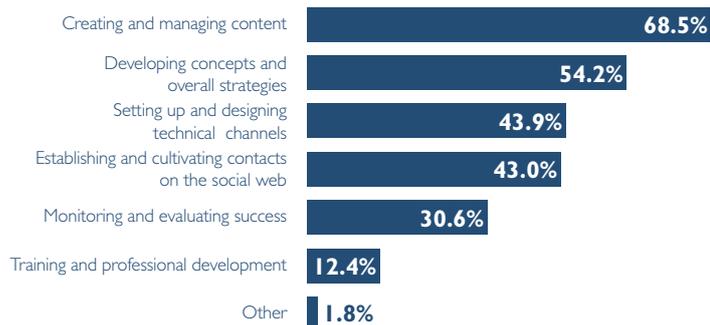
Corporations and other organisations are handling the topic of social media communications more and more strategically, with most having moved beyond the experimentation stage. This is one of the key results identified by the study "Social Media Delphi 2012" in Germany, for which 860 communications professionals working in companies, governmental institutions, associations and non-profit organisations were surveyed by the University of Leipzig together with Fink & Fuchs Public Relations and presssprecher magazine. Another key finding is that organisations are devoting financial resources into expanding their social media structures: around 39 per cent of the surveyed communicators state that they have special budgets allocated to social media communications, a year-on-year increase of 22 points. Organisations with a longer experience in social media and a larger number of social media activities more often have a separate budget. Similarly, larger companies and listed corporations are better positioned in this regard. The majority of respondents (64 per cent) expect this budget to increase in

the future. Investments focus mainly on the creation and management of contents (69 per cent), as well as on developing communication concepts and overall strategies (54 per cent) (see below left). The survey also finds that there are no dominant patterns for the integration of social media in organisational processes: collaboration styles within organisations are described very diversely and in many cases still resemble experimental phases. At just about one in three of the surveyed organisations, social media communications collaboration is rather spontaneous and experimental, and at almost 19 per cent the responsibilities are not explicitly defined. The majority of the respondents report about centrally controlled collaboration routines, while decentralised approaches are stated almost as frequently. This is an indication that collaboration is handled differently at various levels and often several organisational models are combined. *Taken from Social Media Delphi 2012, University of Leipzig/Fink & Fuchs PR/presssprecher*

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Focus of social media spendings

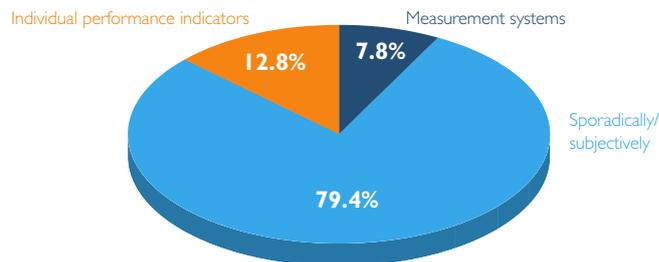
Investments are mostly used for developing content, concepts and strategies



Evaluation of social media communications

Only one in five organisations measures success systematically

Evaluation of social media communications takes place by ...



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PERSONNEL

 HM Government 
Godric Smith
(Executive Director,
Government Comms)
UK Gov



GB: Smith replaces Grey as head of government comms

Former head of communications for the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) GODRIC SMITH is to replace Jenny Grey, Smith as executive director of government comms on an interim basis until the end of the year following the departure of Grey, who will join Citigroup. Smith takes on the role having worked on the Olympics over the past seven years as director of communications for the ODA.

 
Ann Lindell Saeby
(SVP Corporate Communication)
NCC
Start: 01 Nov



SE: Saeby to build up communications at NCC AB

ANN LINDELL SAEBY will be the new senior vice president of corporate communications for Swedish construction company NCC AB. She joins NCC from Fortum, where she is the vice president of external communications and brand for the Group. Saeby has held several different communication positions at Fortum since 2004. Prior to this, she worked at Kream Gavin Andersson in various senior executive posts, and as communication consultant.

 
Jennifer Moore-Braun
(Head, Corporate Media Relations)
BASF Group
Start: 01 Nov



DE: Personnel changes in BASF Communications

JENNIFER MOORE-BRAUN has been appointed head of corporate media relations at BASF Group, the largest diversified chemical company in the world. She succeeds Michael Grabicki who as vice president will work on a project related to BASF's 150th anniversary in 2015. Grabicki has been responsible for corporate media relations since 1998. At the same time, Juliana Ernst will return to the Communications & Government Relations department as deputy head of corporate media relations BASF Group.

 
Giovanna Gregori
(Director of PR, Comms and B2B)
McArthurGlen Group IT



IT: McArthurGlen creates new PR director role

European designer outlet giant McArthurGlen Group has created a new role of director of public relations, communications and business-to-business as the group expands. GIOVANNA GREGORI joins McArthurGlen in this position as it opens its 21st designer outlet this autumn in Hamburg. Gregori was public relations manager at Louis Vuitton Italy, responsible for all corporate projects and events in Italy.

 
Daniel Göring
(Head, Corporate Communications)
Orascom Development
Start: 15 Oct



CH: Orascom Development strengthens communications

DANIEL GÖRING will become head of corporate communications at Orascom Development Holding AG, a developer of fully-integrated towns that offer hotels, private villas and apartments, leisure facilities and supporting infrastructure. In his new function, Göring will be responsible for all communication activities of Orascom Development, including the tourism project Andermatt Swiss. Previously, Göring was head of communications at the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA).

 
Arnold Drijver
(Global Head, Internal Communications)
AEGON N.V.
Start: Aug 1



NL: Drijver heads internal communications at AEGON

As of August this year, ARNOLD DRIJVER is global head of internal communications at AEGON N.V., an international provider of life insurance, pensions and asset management. Previously, Drijver was director of group communications at engineering consultancy group Grontmij. Other previous roles include manager corporate communication at Maxeda (formerly Vendex KBB) and manager public relations and public affairs at KPMG.

PERSONNEL



Eric Gerritsen
(Executive VP, communication & public affairs)
Sky Italia
Start: 01 Sept

IT: Sky Italia appoints Gerritsen to oversee communications

Sky Italia has appointed ERIC GERRITSEN as executive vice president of communication and public affairs, reporting directly to the CEO Andrea Zappia. Gerritsen joins from his role as CEO and VP Italy, EMEA Corporate & Crisis Communication in Burson-Marsteller. In his new role, he coordinates Communications & Public Affairs, which incorporates public relations, publicity & press, internal communications and public affairs.



Frédéric Michel
(Director, PA & Communication)
Telefónica
Start: 15 Oct

ES: Michel joins Telefónica from News Corp

Spanish telecommunications group Telefónica has announced the hire of FRÉDÉRIC MICHEL as European director of public affairs and communication. Previously, Michel worked as a lobbyist for News Corp, a position he held from 2009 until earlier this year. Prior to that he spent six years at consultancy ReputationInc, after working at thinktank Policy Network. At Telefónica, Michel will report to Richard Poston, Telefónica Europe's director of corporate affairs.



Leonie Foster
(Director of Communications)
Betfair
Start: 01 July

GB: New head of corporate communications at Betfair

Betfair has appointed LEONIE FOSTER to the role of head of corporate communications, reporting to director of communications Jonathan Oates. Formerly a communications manager at BAE Systems, Leonie has worked as a PR executive at 3i Group and as a senior account executive at Publicis Consultants. She started her career as a corporate tax associate with Deloitte.

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EVENTS



20.09.2012 EUPRERA 2012 Congress

The annual congress of the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) will focus on "The changing profession of public relations". With increased demands and complexity, the meaning of PR today along with its change as profession needs to be researched and analysed.

► EUPRERA, Istanbul University

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26.09.2012 Social CRM 2012

Social CRM 2012 will explore the latest tools and techniques for implementing a successful Social CRM strategy. Join speakers from eBay, BNP Paribas Fortis, McCann Brussels, Dimelo and more to explore how innovative brands are using social media to build closer relationships with customers.

► Our Social Times, BIP Bruxelles

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15-16.10.2012 Social Media for Public Administrations & Institutions

This seminar is tailored to the needs of communication experts and other members of staff dealing with the external communication of public organisations and institutions at European, national, regional and local level.

► European Academy for Taxes, Economics & Law, Berlin

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28.11.2012 Social Media Results For PR & Comms

31 engaging brands including Audi, Asda, American Express, Sony Europe and Twitter will share how to keep content fresh and innovative and how to respond to negativity wisely for social media which delivers real return on engagement for PR and comms.

► Grand Connaught Rooms, London

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