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THE MARKETING DREAM:

A PERFECT MEDIA MIX

EMILY HILL

If there's such a thing as a magic factor in marketing and communications as we enter a new decade, it's realising that elusive fantasy: the perfect media mix.

To make it happen, organisations must harness the plethora of channels available to them, formulating a strategy that combines paid, owned and earned media for maximum effect. Just look at how those working at the very cutting edge achieved this on Super Bowl Sunday 2020. "The average cost of a 30-second Super Bowl ad this year was a whopping \$5 million," explains Jon Buss, UK managing director at Yext. This means brands from Audi to TurboTax shelled out nearly \$200,000 per second to drive awareness during the big game, Mr Buss says.

"But it works: everyone talks about the ads before, during, and often long after the game. And these brands are betting on driving more than discussion."



Anything that acts as a conduit between a brand and a consumer can be thought of as media.

The business strategy behind these campaigns is multidimensional, working across paid, owned, earned, and social media channels. "More than 73% of people watched the action with a mobile device in hand: the TV to digital transformation can happen in an instant." The lesson is that the most brilliant brand strategies "are fully prepared for that moment of intent", Mr Buss says.

The definition of what constitutes media today goes far beyond the six or so channels traditionally associated with media planning, according to Simon Harwood, head of strategy for the7stars, the UK's largest independent media agency. "Anything that acts as a conduit between a brand and a consumer can be thought of as media, including all of the brand's owned touch points as well as the people their customers come into contact with."

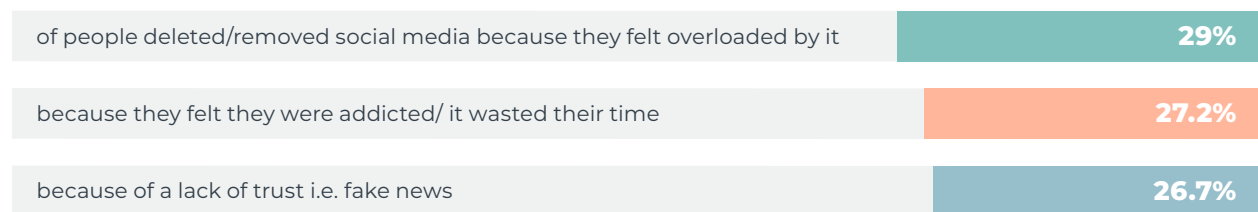
Mr Harwood points to Burger King's "McWhopper" campaign as a strategy that nestled perfectly at the cross-section between all of the marketing functions. "It set out to celebrate the notion of peace by extending an olive branch to its biggest rival (with its tongue

in its cheek) via an open letter to McDonald's, published via a full-page ad in newspapers ... But it went much further, creating a host of digital assets to allow punters to make their own McWhopper, designing a new restaurant and uniform, placing media around McDonald's restaurants and fuelled social media commentary."

What sort of campaign was this — paid, owned, or earned? The answer is all three — a template for the perfect media mix. "Was it pure PR or pure paid media?" Mr Harwood asks. "No. Was it a great total communications plan? Absolutely."

There are clearly differences between companies depending on industry, size, and the budgets involved. What's possible is defined by what is affordable. But the theme of presenting a unified message across diverse media still stands.

The anti-social media movement



Ipsos MORI 2019

"Brands need to have an open mind when it comes to their media strategy and channel mix," says Dan Brown, digital performance director at global media agency MediaSense, who has worked with brands like Comparethemarket.com, Adidas and JustEat. "There is no one size fits all formula; as the media landscape has fragmented, so has the diversity of approaches."

Although the overall trend might be towards data-driven, audience-led channels like Programmatic, Facebook and YouTube, it's important to remember that "offline media" channels still have much to contribute.

"Whilst traditional TV may struggle to reach younger audiences, it still offers brands highly effective reach and delivers tangible results — TV is one of the few channels that can be

46%



agree they are more likely than ever to agree they know less about their media performance despite having more data

Mediasense 2020

directly linked to ROI and business goals,” Mr Brown adds. “The key is finding an approach based on your brand positioning, target audience, investment levels and measurement objectives.”

Ultimately, the key to the perfect media mix is making an imaginative leap: becoming comfortable and excited at the prospect of mixing up your media, perfectly.

A MEDIA STRATEGY THAT PAYS

BELINDA BOOKER

Traditionally viewed as “fluffy”, a new focus on data and analytics is giving PR and comms a seat at the boardroom table.

PR and comms is giving marketing a run for its money. Thanks to new technology, businesses can – for the first time – measure the true, bottom-line impact of their campaigns. And according to the PR and earned media software company Cision, the results can be compelling.

51%



devote at least 10 per cent of their annual budget to measuring, monitoring and understanding the impact of their comms programmes

Cision 2019

“The research and data that we have around this is starting to prove that PR and comms has the potential to have a better ROI than marketing. It's just that up until the last two years, no one's ever been able to get the data to prove it,” says Barnaby Barron, insights director for Europe, the Middle East, India and Africa in Cision's Technology Category. Helping clients prove the ROI of their PR and comms is now a core focus for Cision. The company's earned media

attribution software enables clients to understand who interacts with their content and track downstream conversions.

“Historically, PR and comms has talked in vanity metrics. And the reality is that doesn't speak the same language as the CFO,” says Mr Barron. “Now, PR and comms teams have the ability to see how many people viewed a particular article, subsequently went to the brand's website and then purchased a product.”

This information is helping PR and comms professionals communicate effectively with their marketing counterparts, he adds.

SANITY, NOT VANITY

Previously, PR and comms professionals had to rely on estimated reach figures. But with increased visibility around the performance of campaigns, they can now present senior decision makers with the facts.

“PR people used to go to their senior leaders and say, ‘we got a hundred articles and we reached 50 million people’. Now technology is confirming that they gained 100 articles, but actually only reached 500,000 people.”

While Mr Barron concedes these conversations can be difficult, most business leaders welcome the clarity.

“Often they knew the numbers were overinflated anyway. Actually being able to look at the performance of particular articles helps you understand what type of content people are engaging with, rather than just saying ‘X number of people visit the Daily Mail’. So it allows you to be a lot more targeted and strategic with the PR and comms strategy that you have.

That's not to say the old data is worthless; it's just that now PR and comms professionals have the ability to layer it with additional metrics, it can deliver far richer insights.

“A lot of the old metrics that everyone's used to reporting on, like volume, impressions, sentiment and message delivery, remain important, but we can layer on readership numbers and it becomes really interesting,” Mr Barron explains. “Let's say you have two pieces of

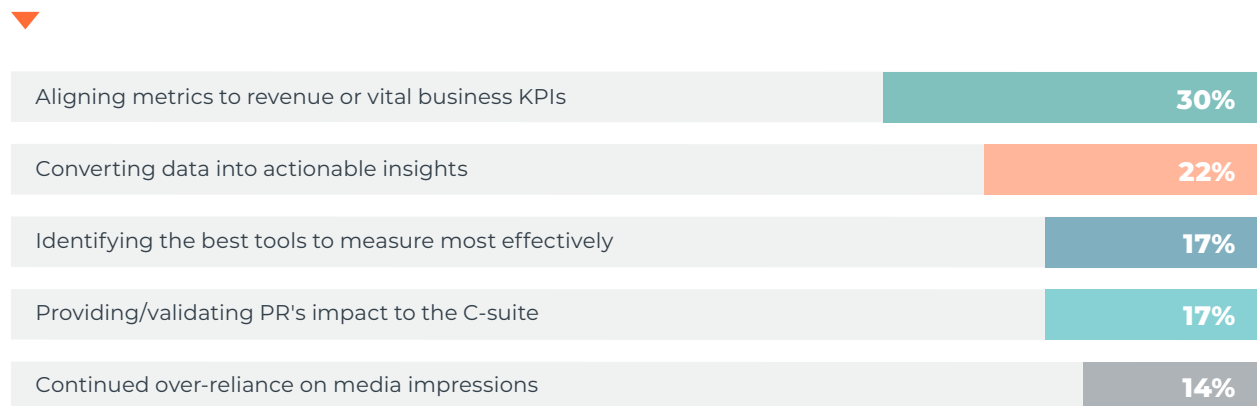
content, both with a potential audience of 50 million people, but one is read by five million people and the other by one million. You can see that the audience was proportionally more engaged with your first piece.”

Mr Barron also highlights the potential of data on social shares.

“That gives you information around how much people are engaging with the articles. For example, is the article shared by one in 20 people who read it? Or is it one in 50 people? Once you have that information, some of the qualitative data can start pointing you towards what's driving that.”

Pinpointing the problem

Respondents had five PR measurement challenges and were asked to rank them from most to least difficult.



Cision 2019

JOINED UP WORKING

A data-driven approach doesn't just benefit the PR and comms team - it can feed into marketing, blurring the lines between the two departments and helping them both work more effectively.

By understanding which audiences are engaging with content (and in real time), marketing can make strategic decisions to target those audiences with paid advertising.

“It gives you the ability to be much more agile,” says Mr Barron. “If you can see content is being shared on social, you might decide to do some paid promotion behind it, or some other activities on your own social channels. Because you can see metrics within an hour



The work of PR and comms professionals deserves to be taken seriously.

– Barnaby Barron, Cision

of an article going live, it allows you to be much more responsive, particularly if you've got a big campaign or announcement going on.”

But the scope of data and analytics in PR and comms goes beyond individual campaigns - it can provide vital business intel. Trends can be

difficult to spot, but data from PR and comms allows businesses to track particular topics, helping them understand their importance.

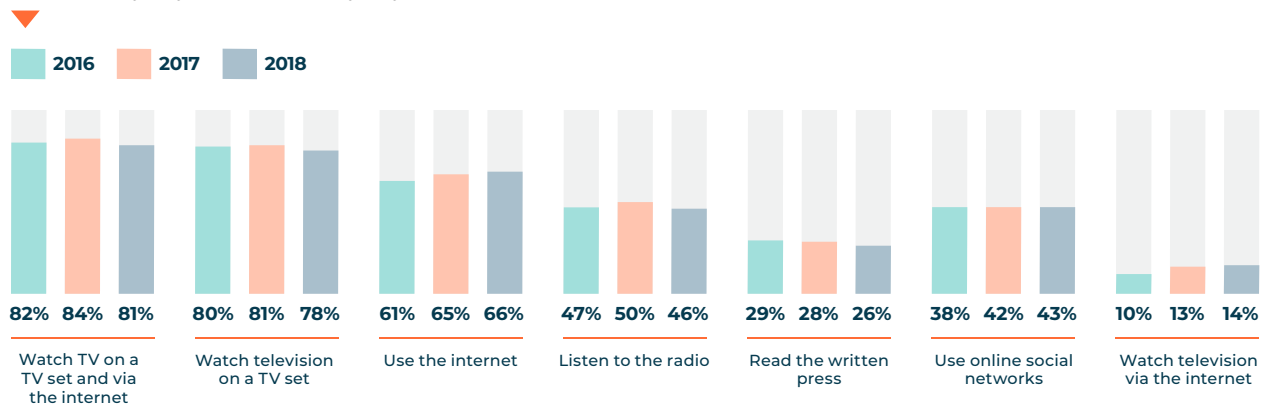
“Is there something strategically you might want to do to get in front of that, to avoid a future crisis, for example? That type of insight can be invaluable to the wider business.” And when PR and comms helps a business to stay one step ahead, it becomes a respected voice in the boardroom. “The work of PR and comms professionals deserves to be taken seriously,” Mr Barron concludes. “I believe we’ll see the industry grow in importance as this digital transformation proves its value.”

TUNING INTO THE FUTURE CUSTOMER

Given the multitude of channels at consumers' fingertips, what are the key consumer behaviours and attitudes your media strategy should be tapping into?

Television reigns supreme as the medium of choice on a daily basis

Penetration of daily media usage in the EU 2016-2018, by media. Share of respondents who used the following media every day or almost every day in EU 28 countries from 2011 to 2018.



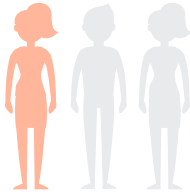
European commission 2018

And when it comes to internet usage, the future is mobile...



1 in 3

adults
never use a
computer to
go online



1 in 10

adults
only use a
smartphone

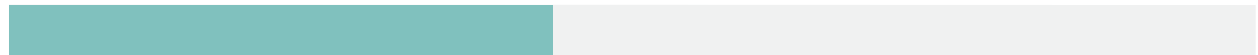


Ofcom 2019

But consumer awareness of the increasingly large role that technology plays in our lives means a digital detox is top of mind



43%



The percentage of households seeking time away from their smartphone and other internet enabled devices – up from 41% in 2017.

EY 2019

And trust should still be a primary focus when considering how to engage with your audience. Concerns over quality information...



57%



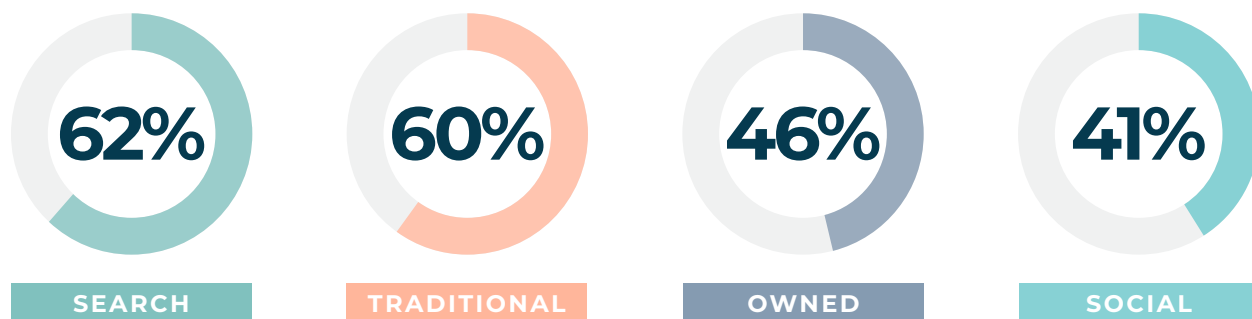
respondents agree the media they use are contaminated with untrustworthy information.

76%



respondents agree they worry about false information or fake news being used as a weapon.

Traditional media and search engines most trusted
Concerns over quality information...



Advertisers now held accountable



72%



respondents agree companies should stop advertising with any media platform that fails to prevent the spread of fake news and false information.

Edelman 2020

THE B2B BENEFITS OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

BELINDA BOOKER

B2B companies make little use of influencer marketing, but the impact on the bottom line can be substantial.

People buy people – even when shopping for business. So why aren't more B2B companies taking advantage of influencer marketing? According to Jay Baer, founder of Convince and Convert, 91 per cent of B2B transactions are at least influenced by word of mouth.

Against that backdrop, influencer marketing would seem to be an obvious resource for B2B specialists. However, this potent tool is being largely ignored.

Proving return on investment can be a stumbling block, as results take time to show, says Emma Rush, UK president of B2B creative agency Gyro. Measuring the impact of influencer marketing on a brand is a challenge, she says, with many B2B marketers focused on key performance indicators like Marketing Qualified Leads and Sales Qualified Leads.

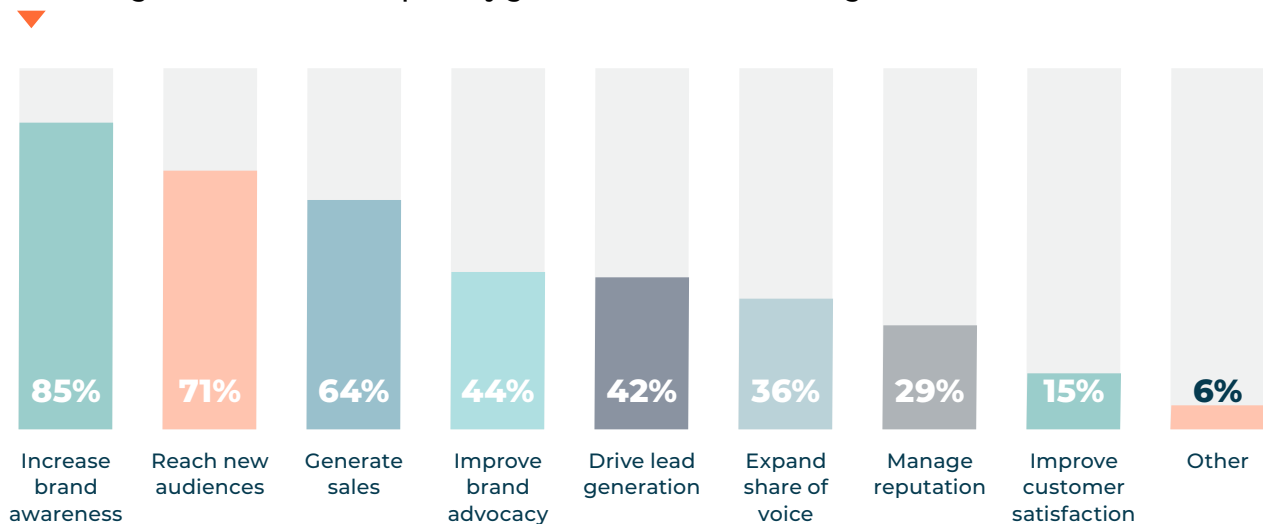
“Within this environment it can be difficult to prioritise activities that have an impact on brand building over a longer time frame, rather than lead generation activity,” she explains.

Tom Pick, a B2B digital marketing consultant, says that consumer-facing influencer marketing has earned a bad reputation. “It’s viewed as superficial, manipulative, and numbers-based, with ‘influence’ determined by the number of Instagram followers an individual has.”

But the B2B companies succeeding with influencer marketing take a different approach, working with highly relevant “micro influencers”. The focus is on aligning with specialists who are highly regarded in their field, adding credibility to a brand story or product, Ms Rush says.

“It’s less about reach and more hyper-targeting.”

Increasing brand awareness is primary goal of influencer marketing



Mediakix 2019

SOCIAL LISTENING

But how does a business find these individuals? “Social listening” can help identify influencers who post on the key topics or products that are relevant to a brand, Ms Rush says. She also recommends that companies research who their top customers follow and engage with on LinkedIn.

Influencer marketing isn't limited to individual external experts; it can include partner brands and even a company's own employees.

“Partner marketing is a larger concept that includes non-traditional online publications, complementary vendors, industry analysts and trade associations,” says Mr Pick.



Employees have a 10x larger network than the typical company

– Emma Rush, Gyro

Encouraging employees to share company content can have a big impact on brand awareness, says Ms Rush. “Employees have a 10x larger network than the typical company. When they share a post, it's seen as 3x more authentic and gets double the click-through rate [source: [LinkedIn](#)].”

Influencer marketing, then, allows B2B brands to achieve real cut-through – they just have to make a sustained commitment and be prepared to wait a little longer for results.

THE PLUMBING BRAND

The producers of the plumbing system Hep2O wanted to grow brand relevance and affinity with professional installers, with the goal of increasing market share in the plastic piping sector. Working with Tangerine Communications, Hep2O manufacturer Wavin conducted research to discover where this audience goes for work-related advice and inspiration. This found that installers are increasingly turning to trusted and authentic peers with proven online kudos.

“We developed a strategic influencer engagement campaign that combined ongoing influencer liaison and one-off ‘spike’ activities,” says Barry Maginn, associate director at Tangerine Communications. “Talking to influencers on a weekly basis, engaging with their

content and offering them a ‘no expectations’ opportunity to test Hep2O products resulted in a continuous stream of user-generated content across Twitter and Instagram, and helped us build our community of advocates.” The companies also provided carefully selected participating influencers with exclusive physical experiences, events and insights, Mr Maginn adds, with wider online audiences “incorporated into these activities through exciting videos, imagery and interactive content”.

The campaign, which won “Best Use of Social Media or Influencer Marketing” at the B2B Marketing Awards 2019, doubled hits to Hep2O’s landing page. Meanwhile, spontaneous awareness rose from 68 per cent to 74 per cent. Perhaps most importantly, there was a substantial impact on the brand’s bottom line, with a year on year sales boost of 11 per cent.

THE INVESTMENT BANK

Allegiance Capital is a premier private investment bank specialising in mergers and acquisitions for privately held middle market companies. The bank worked with Zen Media to increase its visibility among middle-market chief executive officers (CEOs) and executives in targeted industries, including the oil and gas sector.

A key part of its strategy was building connections with industry influencers and media Zen Media collaborated with these influencers to create strategic content for blogs, white papers, and emails, and used Allegiance’s employees to amplify promotion of the content on social media. This was supported by a full-scale SEO campaign to drive qualified traffic to the website.

Shama Hyder, CEO of Zen Media, says the campaign generated coverage of Allegiance in over 20 key regional and national media outlets, including full cover stories. It organically increased the number of followers on Allegiance’s LinkedIn page by 78 per cent and reached over 76,000 people with the bank’s Twitter handle.

THE SOFTWARE COMPANY

Event software company G2Planet used influencer marketing to triple its monthly website visits between 2017 and 2019. The company, which had previously been inactive on social media, began an entirely organic programme in which it engaged with event industry bloggers, consultants, podcasters, and high-profile executives from complementary parts of the events ecosystem, such as venues and sound and lighting companies.

“It’s an industry where people are happy to share their thoughts and value the exposure,” says Mr Pick. “For example, the company would solicit answers from influencers about an important question or trend, write up an article quoting these experts, and get it published on a highly regarded industry website. Then the company would republish the piece on its own blog a month or two later.”

This approach boosted G2Planet’s reputation, winning it regular mentions and bylines in key industry publications. It also helped grow its referral network by establishing more than a dozen strategic partnerships with complementary industry technology vendors.

“The company’s following and traffic from LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram also increased,” says Mr Pick. “But most importantly, lead flow, opt-in email list, and sales opportunities grew substantially.”

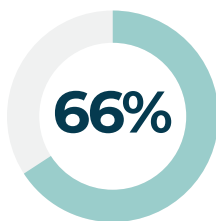
As customers have given it the seal of approval already, the future of influencer marketing is an exciting opportunity for B2B brands to connect with their audiences on a whole new level – one based on trust.

BRAND SYNCHRONISATION

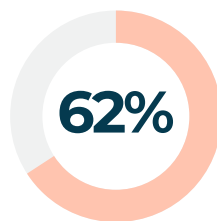
5 POINTERS FOR BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL MARKETING STRATEGY

EMILY HILL

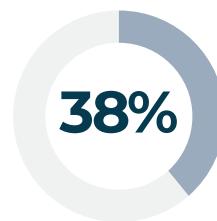
In the modern age, the most successful marketing strategy is one that aligns earned media with owned and paid channels. But while the importance of this concept is easily acknowledged, implementing it is more complex. It’s vital to create a united and consistent brand, but how exactly can this be achieved?



66% of brands are actively looking to reorganise their internal model for marketing



62% of respondents agree that a skills shortage is holding back the industry in data, tech and analytics



38% of brands prioritise performance marketing over long-term brand

Mediasense 2020

01 ▶ COORDINATE MARKETING AND PR

It's crucial to ensure that all elements of the business are consolidated in the media strategy. This means one thing: no silos.

"Marketing and PR should be 100 per cent aligned in their approach to all forms of content across the PESO model - that's paid, earned, social and owned," explains Holly Pither, founder and managing director of Tribe PR. "Not only will this ensure a consistent tone of voice across all media, it also ensures you get the best value for money."

This means that vital work won't be wasted through different departments failing to collaborate effectively. "All too often great content is produced (sometimes at a high cost), used once by a team and then gets left in the proverbial drawer ... This is such a waste. If good content is produced, the key is to 'wring it dry.'"

For instance, Ms Pither suggests that brands take snippets from their white papers and turn them into social media posts or use them to "hijack the news agenda in a reactive comment ... Doing this will not only mean you get far more eyes on that content, but will also guarantee a consistent voice, tone and message across multiple channels."

02 ▶ USE THE SALES FRONT LINE

It's vital to harness the insights of sales departments, says Richard Cook, managing director of Champion Communications. "These are the guys on the front line of the business when it comes to customer acquisition – they are the ones that understand what is keeping their customers awake at night." In a survey his company conducted with techUK, 93 per cent of respondents said that better alignment between sales and PR would increase their ability to track clients.

The perils of failing to align marketing, PR and sales teams are hard to overstate. "It's extremely common when we work with Fortune 500 companies that the various departments don't communicate," says social media marketing expert Tim Hyde. "The best examples are where brands leverage the social currency created from earned media and are then able to amplify this coverage across owned and organic channels to drive both awareness and acquisition."

03 ▶ PUT THE CUSTOMER FIRST

When aligning earned with owned and paid media, always remember the importance of the customer. Any communication coming from a brand needs to be focused on the customer, in creating a personalised, relevant and timely experience.

Those customers interact with brands when and how they choose; a disjointed approach across different types of media can jeopardise the connection, he says.

“Regardless of the channel, brands need to project one personality and create a united message and the tone of voice.”

04 ▶ HARNESS THE POWER OF DATA

Data can tell you exactly how your business is benefiting from media – earned, owned and paid – allowing strategies to be harmonised. Thanks to the digital revolution, “it’s now much more about outcomes – not outputs – and using digital metrics to track and improve performance”, says Louise Vaughan, managing director of PR agency Definition. Ideally, this information should be used to create a clear, simple message that can be transmitted across earned, owned and paid channels.

A truly unified brand is consistent in what it says to its target audience, says Alex Neale, director at Antidote Communications. When this works it is “the red thread that runs through everything they do externally”, she says. “That message should be aligned to what makes the organisation unique and different from competitors and be the ‘guiding light’ for both the PR and marketing teams.”

05 ▶ COMBINE YOUR EFFORTS

A perfectly aligned strategy blends approaches, while maintaining the flexibility to go with what works. “Long gone are the days when the success of a PR campaign was measured on the media ‘thud’ factor and volume of press coverage,” Ms Vaughan says. “Knitting together your earned, owned and paid media channels to deliver far more credibility, authenticity, ownership and impact is key. It delivers far more bang for your buck and it can give you real creative standout against competitors.”

UNLOCKING YOUR POTENTIAL

Cision Ltd is a leading global provider of earned media software and services to public relations and marketing communications professionals. Cision's software allows users to identify key influencers, craft and distribute strategic content, and measure meaningful impact. Cision has over 4,000 employees with offices in 22 countries throughout the Americas, EMEA, and APAC. For more information about its award-winning products and services, including the Cision Communications Cloud®, visit www.cision.co.uk and follow Cision on Twitter [@CisionUK](https://twitter.com/CisionUK).

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