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Social Agenda in Challenging Periods

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Social Media and its Activity in Today's Environment



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By talking about public relations, the first thing that comes to mind is press releases, television news interviews, and newspaper articles. Public relations today is about more than disseminating information in the mainstream media. The latter still plays an important role, but it is no longer the only way of PR. In fact, the development of social media has led to a significant reduction in the audience of traditional media. In today's environment, public relations professionals should be aware that platforms such as blogs and social media allow everyone to publish their material. Therefore, anyone can become a publisher.

Television news was the only media source of information ahead of the World Wide Web, but according to Pew Research Center the gap is also closing. According to the Media Situation Report, audiences have declined across all news media except online.

According to Pew Research Center, 53% of Americans says the internet has been essential during the COVID-19. Outbreak Americans with lower incomes are particularly likely to have concerns related to the digital divide and the digital "homework gap".

Social media makes it much easier for public relations professionals to do their job. Social media allows them to build relationships with journalists and earn their trust. Then they are more likely to take advantage of their information, paying with such valuable currency as airtime, newspaper space and blog posts. Therefore, PR people are still required to pay enough attention to traditional media, they should recognize that it is no longer the only channel for maintaining public relations. In modern conditions, it is necessary to fully use other channels, including social and industry media, as well as representatives of the general population. Generally speaking, it is the latter that require PR managers to pay attention to what ordinary people are saying - after all, with proliferation of free blogging platforms and mobile phones with integrated digital cameras, everyone can become a journalist. Consequently, any of us can play the role of a channel for dissemination of information and report the news about an event even before they start talking about in official media.

Surprisingly, in the age of the Internet, when journalism has undergone major changes, many PR managers still use the old ways of working. However, social media can become

an extensive field of fertile activity for them. In old days, press releases were sent by fax to the editor of a periodical, who looked through them, chose the most interesting and promising one for preparing an article, and simply threw the rest into the trash. Press releases are now sent to editors by e-mail, so the cleaners don't even have to mess with the trash.

The Internet has made these actions redundant. Let's start with the fact that in modern conditions, PR managers must contact specific journalists, offering information to them. To do this, you need to study the media rating and see what topic this or that journalist covers, read his publications and choose the most suitable candidate from your point of view.

Law enforcement agencies must take the most serious action against the media, including social media users, who deliberately disseminate information aimed at creating misconceptions in society. The media must be responsible and provide comprehensive support to measures taken by the state in crisis situations in the country.

In current situation, when the whole world is fighting a pandemic, journalists themselves must strictly observe security measures. For example, journalists participate in various meetings, prepare reports in crowded places. Herein, they should think about health. It should be mentioned that in such conditions they must hold on with providing information to society. This is a great responsibility with adherence to preventive measures against coronavirus. Social media and government agencies have formed a kind of public condemnation against voice recordings on various social networks that do not reflect the real situation with coronavirus. This fact negatively affects psychology of the population. Instead, it is imperative to promote methods of protection against disease, rather than a fake headline that could generate buzz among readers.

Social media should be formed professionally in such conditions. Professionalism is a link to official data or obtaining an official confirmation of the information provided. Besides, the excitement is unacceptable.

Author's biography

Ms. Gumru Eyvazova is a Senior Legal Associate at GRATA International. Before joining to GRATA International she was Legal and External Affairs Executive at British American Tobacco Exports B.V. Representative Office in Azerbaijan. Gumru carries years of experience in banking industry – in capacity of Head of Legal Division, two global airline companies in Azerbaijan – in capacity of Legal Consultant. Ms. Eyvazova studied Public and International Affairs at ADA University (MPP, 2018) and Law at Baku State University (LLM, 2007; BSc, 2004).