Using the media to earn your reputation and build your practice

what you need to know

Federation of Ontario Law Associations
“We think we know someone, but the truth is that we only know the version of them that they have chosen to show us”
The looking glass self

Reputation is what other people are saying about us — and, in this ‘post-fact’ or ‘post-truth’ world, this is not what you really are, but what others perceive you to be.
Image ≠ Reputation

**Image**
- What you frame
- The picture today
- What people see
- Superficial
- Controlled
- Disposable

**Reputation**
- The public decides
- Builds over time
- How folks feel
- Deeper
- Earned
- Durable
Now almost all media content flows in streams.
Every organization is becoming a media organization
Different kinds of media with search at the centre
TV frames the media image
Print still the top of the media food chain

But how?
The resilience of radio / rise of audio
Convincing communication through media relations
Communicate your signal through the noise

- Telling your story...
- To all the people who need to hear it...
- So that those people will do and think...
- What you want them to do or think!
- Know who you are
- Understand what you do
- Think highly of you, agree with you
- Be educated, be persuaded, be motivated to take action
The modern media interview is **NOT** just about answering reporter’s questions!

The majority of interviews fail to achieve their objective, because:

- Lawyers simply answer the questions
- The messages are not delivered
- The story is not told!
The modern media interview

IS about…

Delivering your key messages

Using conversation to communicate

Making the right impression:

- Credible
- Sincere
- Likeable
- ‘Good’
Your job in the media

- Present the ‘human face’ of your practice
- Be a sincere source of information
- Be a spokes-person, not an answer-person!
- Deliver your core messages…
  
  *In a way that will be heard by the right stakeholders*
  
  *In a trustworthy and believable manner!*
- Stay ‘on message’ – all the time!!
- Tell the truth – all the time!!
Three levels of spokesperson perception

- Dr. Albert Mehrabian of UCLA has demonstrated that when you say something, **55% of the way your message is interpreted comes from the way you use your body and how you use your face when you say it**.

- **38% of the interpretation of your message comes from the voice**, tone, texture, and level of conviction.

- A massive **7%** for people to interpret your message based on your words.

- When we speak, we have to balance the visual, vocal, and verbal so that we look and sound like we mean what we say and say what we mean.
The way PR works has completely changed

- Nowadays people know you and think about you based on what they find through searching on Google
- Mainstream media links massively improve your ‘signal’ on search
- Amplification via social networks helps improve your SEO clout even more
- Often more people see your ‘coverage’ via Google and social media than from source
- Studies show that 90% of people only search as far as page 1, so page 1 ‘above the fold’ remains the right place to be
- Much of this occurs during ‘micro-moments’ on a mobile device

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**Quora**

**How many Google searchers go to page two of their search results?**

6 Answers

**Marianne Sweeney, Search Information Architect**

Written May 23, 2011

Academic research indicates that 91% of searchers do not go past page 1 of the search results and over 50% do not go past the first 3 results on page 1. (Using the Internet: Skill Related Problems in User Online Behavior; van Deursen & van Dijk; 2009). I believe that Google’s own research supports the finding that the top of page one is where its at placement-wise.

As with anything, these findings should be taken with a bit of skepticism. Many of the searches performed are “navigational” meaning the searcher has a good idea of what they want and just need a very specific pointer on how to get there. Examples of this would be a company’s URL, distance between two points, movie times, etc. Here the top results would likely contain what they need and want.
These lines will also never cross again
Your Google page one is key
Canada

Jan 2019

The essential headline data you need to understand mobile, internet, and social media use.

- Total Population: 37.12 million
- Mobile Subscriptions: 34.56 million (93% penetration)
- Internet Users: 33.84 million (91% penetration)
- Active Social Media Users: 25.00 million (67% penetration)
- Mobile Social Media Users: 22.00 million (59% penetration)

Urbanisation: 81%

A large majority believe that social media has the capacity to do the greatest damage to an individual or organization’s image.
Good things social media can do

- crowd-source ideas
- share experiences
- sign-up volunteers
- channel opinion
- motivate activists
- induce direct action
- alert the public

Educate the people and inspire positive change!
Bad things social media can do

- deny the honest truth
- spread rumours
- traffic vicious gossip
- deflect attention
- smear opponents
- ‘rabble rouse’

Manipulate the masses and exploit emotions!
The seven deadly digital sins

1. Lust  
   I want this
2. Greed  
   I must get it
3. Gluttony  
   I must have more
4. Sloth  
   I haven’t thought about it
5. Wrath  
   I am extremely angry about this
6. Envy  
   I want what s/he’s got; I’m worth it
7. Pride  
   I’m better; I deserve this; look at me
When asked about the importance of PR today compared to 10 years ago, more than three-quarters (76%) feel that PR is more important, 16 percent (16%) say that it is as important while five percent (5%) say it is less important and three percent (3%) are unsure.
What the news is really all about nowadays
# The news is a product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What sells</th>
<th>What doesn’t sell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ FEAR (e.g. disease and death)</td>
<td>- Dry data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Pictures and colour</td>
<td>- Too many facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Emotion, drama &amp; conflict</td>
<td>- ‘Corporate-speak’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Controversy</td>
<td>- Consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Human stories – people</td>
<td>- Jargon and bullshit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Short, concise information</td>
<td>- Long-winded messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Simple concepts</td>
<td>- Complex arguments/issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ New stuff</td>
<td>- Hard sell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Quirky information</td>
<td>- Old news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Fun and games</td>
<td>- Foreign news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Humour</td>
<td>- Anything that doesn’t affect the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Proximity – local news</td>
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Causes of media coverage

- Eyebrow raising
- Vivid audio, visual or text imagery
- Pure novelty

- Contrapuntal: x versus y
- Black and white, not grey
- The correction of the past with the present

- More than brazen assertion
- Burden of proof and evidence
- Third party legitimacy
All journalists are on Twitter – and you?
Real-time leadership communication

- Only a certain percentage of firms are capable of communicating effectively with real-time leadership in the present moment of the ‘now’, striking the right emotional chord.
- Many firms remain asynchronous ‘interval’ communicators, about things that have happened vs. are happening.
- Monochronic (one thing at a time, a sense of an appropriate time/place for everything) vs. polychronic (multiple things at same time, people-oriented & long-term relationship preferences) communication cultures.
Never use hackneyed media jargon

“No comment”  
“We categorically deny”  
“We take these allegations very seriously”
Communication should not be flat-line monotone
The media ‘news cycle’ looks way different now
COMING UP

NEWS CYCLES ARE OUT, SHOCK CYCLES ARE IN
Messaging propagates differently online

Because the information is propagating in several layers, it is possible for some facts and ideas from the source to be amplified, while others fade. For example, when speaking about a drone strike that killed two American hostages, Warren Weinstein and Giovanni Lo Porto, President Obama emphasized families. However, the news articles and subsequent coverage emphasized that people had been killed.

Caption: An example of word clouds generated from information sources, news articles, shares, comments on President Obama’s speech about the deaths of Warren Weinstein and Giovanni Lo Porto. Green words are positive, red words are negative according to the LIWC dictionary. The size of a word represents word frequency.
The algorithm dynamic

- Your posts are successful or not based on what the algorithm thinks will keep eyeballs fixed on their social network to sell more advertising.
- Weaponized AI-enabled social media isn’t just for Russian bots.
- Tapping into political polarities puts up big numbers but then you end up fishing in the same pond – moderation and centrism doesn’t ‘sell.’
- Programming content into SEO strategy for the ideal Google page 1 is key.
- Thought leadership performs well, with long form ‘signal’ content doing better than short form.
- The storification imperative.
Much of ‘classic corporate comms’ no longer works

- Endemic ‘corporate speak’ is fast becoming unfashionable
  
  What I can tell you is...

- Slick plastic messaging and catch-phrase repetition
- You have to ‘walk the talk,’ not just ‘talk the walk’
- Plastic personas are ‘out’ – the real person is ‘in’
- Lead with flaws, communicate ‘ups’ and ‘downs’
- Communication perfection breeds resentment
- Authenticity trumps almost everything
Donald Trump’s digital disruption...
“Social media has more power than the money”

DONALD TRUMP: So it's a modern form of communication, between Face-- you know, Facebook and Twitter and I guess Instagram, I have 28 million people. 28 million--

LESLEY STAHL: So you are going to keep it up?

DONALD TRUMP: It's a great form of communication. Now do I say I’ll give it up entirely and throw out, that's a tremendous form-- I pick up-- I'm picking up now, I think I picked up yesterday 100,000 people. I'm not saying I love it, but it does get the word out. When you give me a bad story or when you give me an inaccurate story or when somebody other than you and another-- a network, or whatever, because of course, CBS would never do a thing like that right? I have a method of fighting back. That's very tough--

LESLEY STAHL: But you're going to do that as president?

DONALD TRUMP: I'm going to be very restrained, if I use it at all, I'm going to be very restrained. I find it tremendous. It's a modern form of communication. There should be nothing we should be ashamed of. It's-- it's where it's at. I do believe this, I really believe that the fact that I have such power in terms of numbers with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, et cetera, I think it helped me win all of these races where they're spending much more money than I spent. And I won. I think that social media has more power than the money they spent, and I think maybe to a certain extent, I proved that.
The Trump impact on lawyers and social

- Many took note of how he got elected by communicating on Twitter and so for the first time ever, they really felt the power of social.
- Some were repelled and frightened and others were captivated and inspired to imitate him.
- Overall more lawyers think they had better be on social, although not to communicate like Trump.
- For the first time, the risk of being absent on social is seen to be greater than the risk of being present.
How PR disasters are driving CEOs to embrace social media

Bob Pickard

‘Public relations’ (PR) means different things to different people. Some say that it is about image or looking good in public. Others suggest that it is more about ‘spin control’ or media manipulation. There are those who think it is synonymous with getting favourable publicity in the press. More than a few folks feel that PR is synonymous with ‘propaganda’. Then there are the executives inside the communications consulting trade – and I am one of them – who think PR should be considered a core strategic management function of the corporation, right up there in importance with finance, HR and marketing.

Many industry studies and academic papers have tackled the task of pegging PR, and the trade associations representing PR agencies have periodically engaged in debates about the definition. For the purposes of this book, we will use the PR term as explained by the
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Joined January 2017

Lynne Golding  @lynne_golding  · Oct 30
Last night was the latest Toronto launch event of #TheBeleaguered, my second novel in the #BeneathTheAlders historical fiction trilogy published by @BlueMoonPbh. More than 120 joined us at the @rcmihq, including elected officials such as my old friend + Toronto’s mayor @JohnTory.
Craig Thorburn
@ThorburnToronto  Follows you

Partner, @BlakesLaw. Corporate Law, M&A and PE. Tweets/RTs are (i) not legal advice and (ii) my views alone and not necessarily views of my firm or its clients.

Toronto, Ontario

linked.com/in/ThorburnToronto ...

Joined May 2018

Tweets
310
Following 6,189
Followers 6,569
Likes 224
Lists 1

Who to follow
· Refresh · View all

Gowling WLG Canada
Follow

EUprivacy @EUprivacynet
Follow

Mike de Waal @globaliqx
Follow

Craig Thorburn @ThorburnToronto · Nov 5
Positive news like this needs to become part of the public dialogue about #climatechange.

Noe van Hulst @noevanhuilst
A major global flagship project for all of us, highlighting the great & still underrated potential of cleanhydrogen for decarbonizing industry @HydrogenCouncil. Good news that @CNN is showing this! twitter.com/vattenfallgroup...
Stay tuned for a special Twitter lawyers’ event.
Lawyers should communicate like real people, not like machines or things.
TD Comments on Market Reaction to Media Coverage

TD Bank Group ("TD") does not believe certain recent media coverage is an accurate portrayal of our culture, or that it reflects the experience of most of our colleagues, but we take the td.mediaroom.com

7:39 PM - 12 Mar 2017

75 Retweets 149 Likes

Irene Ryckman @Born2_Shop · Mar 12
Replies to @TDNews_Canada @TD_Canada

as a present and loyal customer, I have concerns over the recent media coverage and I will be watching carefully.

AGECee @agecee · Mar 16
Replies to @TDNews_Canada

TD Canada is a shrewd bank has has no concern for the people. This bank must be eradicated SOON.
Be yourself, at your best
Social media communications keys

**Personal**
- speaks to the experience of the communicator, aligns it to target audience sensibility

**Polite**
- never hurts feelings of others on purpose

**Direct**
- cuts to the chase and transmits ‘signal’

**Clear**
- there should be no doubt about the message

**Timely**
- ‘now’ is more narrow and fleeting than ever

**Careful**
- consider the angles and audiences beforehand

**Compelling**
- persuasive and leading

**Framed**
- well in advance, there should be a deliberate decision to share within specific content spheres and personality attributes

**Image conscious**
- but not vain or self-promotional

**Other oriented**
- not ‘me’ and ‘I’ but ‘we’ and ‘us’
Social media communications keys

**Visual**
- 80% of our 100 billion neurons are for visual processing (University of Rochester 2004)

**Fluent**
- free-flowing, smooth, seemingly effortless, easy, natural, fluid

**Authentic**
- perfection = too slick = not credible

**Inspiring**
- Communication designed to strike a chord, lay down a pattern, show the way

**Complementary**
- Lawyer communication should build on and not replace the ‘corporate’ PR of the firm – the two streams should be in concert and well coordinated
“Make the other person feel important – and do it sincerely”
The PR ‘sweet spot’ is where offline/online meet

“...can really only maintain about 150 meaningful relationships at any time. Study after study confirms that most people have about five intimate friends, 15 close friends, 50 general friends and 150 acquaintances”
The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.