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RPM.**

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WEBER SHANDWICK



I had a top night at the Brit Awards in London recently, a spectacular evening of Kasabian on a flame-engulfed stage, Lady Gaga with an armchair sized hair-do, Cheryl Cole looking like a sexy spy and the wonderful Lily Allen flying onto the stage astride a silver rocket. Spectacular entertainment.

With music increasingly at the centre of everything from lifestyle to political marketing, timely that our own pop princess and lifestyle guru Molly Hooper-Aldridge looks at how brands can make sweet music with their customers.

And with PR increasingly moving to the forefront of the modern communications environment, timely also that our European Strategic Planning Director Matty Tong looks at what PR can learn from advertising. We also bring you some more authoritative global PR voices, from Sweden, India and the Middle East.

Finally, I had a humbling lesson in brand advocacy a few days ago when the influential Holmes Report awarded us the Best Multinational PR Firm to Work For in EMEA accolade. Humbling because this award was not voted on by my PR agency or in-house peers, but our own staff in confidential feedback to the Report's author, top global PR analyst Paul Holmes. Employees as brand ambassadors is not just a theory, and I am as proud of my EMEA team as they are to work for Weber Shandwick.



What Can PR Learn from Advertising?

Advertising is very good at certain things; particularly understanding how brands work and what outstanding creativity looks like. But PR shouldn't feel too shabby in comparison.



The demise of advertising has often been predicted. Back in the 90s when I was a grad trainee at BMP DDB, we were terrified of the management consultant, that PowerPointing, grey-suited assassin. As a result we were all sent on a mini-MBA course and told to understand our clients' business a lot better. Very sensible advice. Advertising seemed to weather that particular storm. Why? Because the good ones are very good at what they do. And what exactly is that? Well it may raise a titter somewhere in the audience but I would say that what advertising agencies still do well is to help build brands.

Ad agencies know brands are nothing to be coy about. It's many years since 'brands' were just the province of soap powder, but many business leaders are still guilty of talking about reputation or proposition when really they should be talking about their brand. They could learn a thing or two from those soap powder manufacturers. Brand onions, wheels, keys, and temples are easy to mock. But how much easier is it for a Marketing Services professional to do their job when these things are clearly defined?

Often advertising agencies are deeply involved in creating these brand structures. They are fortunate to be in this position as it gives them an insight into and familiarity with the language, tone and personality of a brand that PR agencies often lack. We need to make a habit of asking for this information from our clients and must be able to demonstrate that we understand their uses and be able to bring them to life and build on them through our work.

And if we have clients that aren't well versed in this sort of thinking then we must demonstrate our strategic worth by helping them construct their own brand models.

Another subject close to the hearts of ad agencies is that of the Target Audience. As a graduate trainee I was told, the planner's role was to act as the 'voice of the consumer' in the strategic and creative development process.

I loved the idea of being the voice of reason, of reality, in trendy, sophisticated ad land. In order to understand the consumer one had to be genuinely interested in contemporary culture, to have some concept of what was going on in popular soap operas, to occasionally read tabloid newspapers.

You also had to be able to make sense of data sources like TGI and Millward Brown and understand the ins and outs of the infamous Link test. But above all we never allowed the creative department to forget the existence of this unpredictable person called the consumer. In PR we are sometimes deflected by the importance of journalists and bloggers and other opinion leaders.

They are of course central to what we do in PR. But whose opinion are we trying to influence with their help? Exactly. In advertising there is a strong emphasis on the well-defined problem.

Getting it right focuses the account team (and client) on identifying the appropriate solution for the issue in hand rather than simply the one you'd all prefer. You can get creative and think laterally in the sure knowledge that you know exactly what you're trying to achieve.

Whereas advertising agencies like to boil everything down to a beautiful sound bite or proposition in order to brief their numerous creative teams, PR really isn't that reductive. It's about focussing on the core story that you have to tell, one that may have multiple audiences, and even multiple messages. But it is the one that will address the main problem and blow it out of the water.

Finally, advertising agencies are generally pretty comfortable with measurement. The main thing to learn here is that measurement isn't something that happens at the end of the process. It's crucial that it is agreed upfront with the client exactly how success will be measured. In an ideal world if there is nothing suitable in place the client might decide to set up a bespoke measurement study to look at the contribution made by PR activity to agreed measures.

However if the project's objectives centre around changing brand perceptions it might make sense to look at existing data sources such as brand image measures from the client's own tracking study. The important thing is to agree in advance what success will look like.

Advertising is very good at certain things; particularly understanding how brands work and what outstanding creativity looks like. But PR shouldn't feel too shabby in comparison. No specialism knows more about the power of storytelling than PR, more about how to engage with people in a way that will last and develop. It is for this reason that our industry is arguably at the forefront of exploiting the opportunities raised by the growth of social media. Advertising has lots to learn from us.



Brands and Bands... Making Music Work.



Linking with the right music platform has been part of many brands' communications strategies for years. But the landscape is changing. Once, brands could simply link up with a music icon or up and coming band by investing in their website, Facebook page or by simply "sponsoring" their show or tour. Today, consumers demand more – much more...

The majority of consumers are brand savvy, fickle and aware of being "marketed to" via brand music sponsorships or "badging". Music lovers – particularly cynical 16-35 year olds – immediately spot "brand badging" and soon switch off.

Brands have to be more astute, subtle and creative. Believability in a music partnership is achieved by providing interesting and unique content to your target market, thereby demonstrating the right to be there and own that property.

Infolust & Brand Me

More than ever, consumers want to express themselves. They want "stuff" (ideally free) that they can tweet or blog about and share with friends. Ultimately, they want to appear "in the know" and connected.

This relatively new phenomenon is known as "Brand Me" – a reflection of who someone is and how they project themselves via digital marketing. Consumers are essentially becoming their own brands and want to share the latest, coolest content.

Pressing Play

Through association with music, brands can meet key objectives. Brand values can be re-aligned, audience share of voice increased and relevance heightened via music touchpoints in target consumers' lives.

For music management, labels and talent, the advantages are usually financial, media or distributional support. Commitment from all stakeholders in the partnership is vital from the start – including the artists.

A great example of music partnership is the strategy adopted by 02 in the UK. It has cut through the "clutter" via its branded venue in Greenwich and regional academies, owned festival and "priority" exclusive ticket offers for its customers. The brand has entered the world of music credibly by investing heavily in "ownable" properties and carried this through both physically and **virtually**.

Other great examples include the Rihanna/Swarovski partnership – an exchange of luxury for credibility. Swarovski creates resonance with a younger, more hip audience and Rihanna becomes more relevant to HNWIs and further luxury sponsorships.

My personal favourite remains Adidas, which for many years has partnered with established music acts such as Run DMC and Estelle as well as new urban talent for its Originals collection. Adidas gets its spot-on across the 360 marketing mix and has won share of voice in the highly competitive trainer market.

Most recently Adidas launched its Adidas Originals House Party ATL creative. Very cool, cohesive and believable – generating massive word-of-mouth and positive advocacy among its core target audience.

Check out **RUN DMC's 'My Adidas' and the Originals House Party Commercial** on YouTube.

So, how can brands hit the right notes?

Five Commandments Of Brand/ Music Collaboration.

- 1 Ensure brand values, brand personalities and brand audiences align from the start** Identify the right music personality (and fan base) to ensure that the brand partnership is taken seriously and provides credibility. There must be mutual respect and understanding to ensure success of overall campaign goals for both artist/platform and brand investment.
- 2 Creative comes first.** Campaign creative must be suitable for artist and brand, unique, engaging and relevant.
- 3 Think 360.** For collaboration to have full audience impact, communications have to work the whole marketing mix. It's the only way a partnership can provide true transformational brand solutions.
- 4 Think digital.** Partnering with a music ambassador across all touchpoints. From blogs, websites and virals to broadcast and print press – all social media must be considered to ensure best outreach and increased awareness.
- 5 Be brave.** Push boundaries and create something unforgettable and truly "brand owned". Understanding what limitations both artist and brand are working under is vital from the outset.

Let The Music Play

At SLAM PR we understand how to create the perfect music partnership strategy for our clients – partnering Braun with Lily Allen, for example. It's our mission to deliver cohesive and strategic 360 and digital programmes that guarantee results.

One recent GSK campaign that married both music and fashion raised major awareness of a disease that kills over three women a day, yet can often be prevented, is Fight Cervical Cancer in Style. This is a fantastic example of working with key music ambassadors (who really believed in the campaign) and ensuring every touchpoint was met to raise maximum impact of the disease awareness programme. View the campaign, including its climax at Koko in London (transmitted on Channel 4 in a 45-minute special), at www.showyourstyle.co.uk.

Music and brands can create beautiful partnerships together. The trick is to know your audience, agree outcomes for both partners and then wow with creativity and content. Call us and turn up the music!



The PR Industry in India. On the Fast Track.



Indian companies today understand the need to be more transparent with external stakeholders, providing as much clarity on corporate values as corporate vision.

Since the introduction of Goldman Sach's BRIC report, India's potential to become a global economic powerhouse has been much debated. On the one hand, a fast growing 'brand hungry' urban middle class, the rapid growth of urban infrastructure, real estate and services, and a huge increase in foreign capital inflows have fuelled predictions that India's GDP per capita in US\$ terms will quadruple. On the other, the need to overcome enormous infrastructure underdevelopment, inefficiencies in domestic markets and continued political and cultural constraints on growth, continues.

Whatever transpires, there is no doubt that from the public relations industry's perspective, India is on a roll. It is witnessing a profound shift in its relevance and role in effective marketing communications. There is every expectation that its place in corporate India will become increasingly significant as the industry matures.

But such change is not entirely new. In its 60-year history, the Indian PR industry has tracked the evolution of those in other developing nations, albeit more quickly. The industry's genesis lies in an Indian public sector where fully staffed PR departments were relegated largely to a hospitality function and responsible for government official visits to their sites. The Public Relations Officer title was accorded to anyone whose primary job was to look after people, be they customers, business associates or government dignitaries.

Although The National Association of PR Practitioners was established in 1958, it wasn't until the late 1980s that the PR industry began to properly take shape, with advertising agencies sprouting PR divisions as business offshoots while a few larger corporates set up PR departments.

The liberalisation of India's economic policies in the 1990s and the entry of multinationals provided the catalyst for the Indian PR industry. Not only did the multinationals set up best practice internal PR departments, but a few of the large international PR agencies also followed them into India. Buoyed by the success of, and demand for, PR services, several local agencies were established and it is estimated that today there are over 1,000 PR agencies nationally.

With this evolution, there has also been a change in the nature and complexity of PR campaigns. Many award-winning initiatives in the 1980s were internally focused: newsletters, internal communication for name change campaigns and corporate uniform change. There was a reticence on the part of many corporates to speak out openly in the media due to concerns of disclosure and misrepresentation; as a result, they adopted a very low key, reactive media strategy.

Much has changed. Indian companies today understand the need to be more transparent with external stakeholders, providing as much clarity on corporate values as corporate vision. Campaigns are bolder, more daring and ambitious too, with companies vying for consumers' attention in an increasingly competitive media and business marketplace. And such campaigns have won favour on the global stage, with Indian PR initiatives vying for top global awards, and winning.

As is the case elsewhere, changed consumer consumption habits have accounted for much of what is happening in the industry. With an Indian middle class forecast to represent 59% of India's consumption power over the next 15 years, the channels of information they choose to use, to make informed decisions prior to purchase, have become pivotal in communications strategy development. This is where the PR sector has flourished and, if McKinsey's prediction of an Indian economy that will become the fifth largest consumer market in the world by 2025 is proved accurate, there remains enormous opportunity.

But the fast-track growth of the public relations industry in India will be far from an easy ride. Much is dependent on its ability to operate more effectively in an

increasingly competitive market at a time when clarity around the depth and reach of its core services remains shaky in places. As is the case elsewhere, strong growth in digital and social media consumption has opened up opportunities for the public relations industry, whilst inevitably creating a new competitive set too. But digital communications is not the panacea. We believe that demand for reputation and issues management services will see strong growth too, alongside a greater demand for research and business information tools that feed an appetite for better managed risk.

When compared to other markets in the Asia Pacific and EMEA regions, India has the distinct advantage of strong English language skills, making it a first port-of-call for those organisations looking to outsource services or build business infrastructure. This plays into the public relations industry's strengths, tapping it as a natural source of articulate and well-crafted editing services.

But the industry must also resist the temptation to become a commodity business, providing low-cost services to high cost markets. It neither serves the interests of its clients, its people or itself.



Paying Attention to the Sinners and the Saints.



Financial disincentives are proven to affect behaviour and personal financial incentives are increasingly being used to motivate people to change addictive behaviours.

"The only two certainties in life are death and taxes." Benjamin Franklin, 1789

Recently author Martin Amis caused a stir in the UK when, with a sort of Swiftian satire, he proposed euthanasia booths for dealing with the 'silver tsunami' – nearly a quarter of the UK population will be aged 65+ by 2030. Unsurprisingly, his comments were condemned by both those in favour of assisted suicide who felt he was glib and those against euthanasia who found his proposal offensive.

Truth told, there are myriad public health challenges today: ageing populations, rising chronic diseases and unhealthy lifestyles chief among them.

Compounding these problems are record high levels of public debt and escalating healthcare costs, forcing governments and health insurance providers to place greater emphasis on preventive behaviour change and public health in general in order to cut costs.

Financial disincentives are proven to affect behaviour and personal financial incentives are increasingly being used to motivate people to change addictive behaviours. Both techniques work by providing an immediate reward for behaviours that grant health gains in the longer term. One of the earliest attempts to use an excise tax for health purposes occurred at the end of the 17th century in Britain. Cheap gin was consumed in large quantities, at one point being responsible for the death rate overtaking the birth rate in London. The Gin Act was passed making it prohibitively expensive. After the Gin Riots, various regulations involving less harsh taxes paved the way for the structures that exist today – labelled as 'sin taxes'.

Taxing the Sinner

A surcharge on cigarettes – on average, 75% of the retail price across Europe – has helped curb smoking, making these taxes one of the most effective weapons in anti-tobacco efforts. And in the UK, the latest budget presented by the Chancellor set a 2%-above-inflation tax escalator on alcohol, resulting in nearly 40% duty. Whether this will have an impact on the frightening levels of binge drinking and impending 'liver crisis' here is being anxiously monitored by public health professionals.

Elsewhere, proposals for taxes to burden insalubrious individuals who put personal pleasure before social responsibility are being debated. Taiwan may be leading the way; a bill is being drafted to levy a special tax on sugary drinks, candy, cakes, fast food and alcohol. Revenue from the tax would finance health awareness efforts or subsidise the island's cash-strapped national health insurance programme.

Similar efforts are underway across Europe as governments seek to mandate healthier diets. Romania is seeking to tax fast foods, the first such tax in the world. Denmark has been eyeing fiscal policy as a way to curb unhealthy eating habits for a while; a new tax on chocolates, ice cream and other sweets could generate £180M per

year. And in America, where hyperactive children gulp down 30 gallons of fizzy drinks every year, the governor is pitching a penny-per-ounce tax on soft drinks. In September, President Obama called a soda tax "an idea that we should be exploring."

Praising the Saints

Recently, UK think tank The King's Fund reviewed behaviour change programmes using positive and negative incentives. Their main conclusion was that financial incentives are effective in encouraging people to perform clearly defined, time-limited, simple behavioural tasks, and participation in lifestyle programmes.

Examples of using positive incentive include:

- School pupils in Scotland earn points by eating healthy school meals which can be exchanged for items for Save the Children projects abroad, including farm animals, medical supplies and classroom equipment.

- Overweight patients in the UK county of Kent receive £70 to lose 15lbs, £160 to lose 30lbs and £425 to lose 50lbs and keep it off for six months.

- Food shoppers in New Zealand received a 12.5 per cent discount on healthy foods; purchases of healthy foods increased by 11 per cent among participants receiving discounts and remained significant six months after the study (and the discounts) ended.

- Young people in Tanzania receive £30 if they test negative for sexually transmitted diseases over three years in a World Bank trial.

These efforts demonstrate that public health practitioners cannot ignore the role that financial incentives and disincentives can play in the design of comprehensive behaviour change programmes. Governments can no longer afford for an ageing population to engage in guilty pleasures without intervention and neither should populations expect to continue unhealthy indulgences whilst expecting government assistance later in life.

However, in order for financial incentives to affect positive behaviour change, the communications strategy around them has to be coherent and compelling. Individual responsibility must be balanced with social imperative. The narratives that we craft should fairly recognise the saint and the sinner in all of us.



Think About the Future.

Add digital to the mix and you have a hugely potent and flexible approach to delivering messages via advocates that make a difference.

Dedicated Digitalness

As Weber Shandwick's INLINE research and philosophy shows, digital can no longer be regarded as an unruly young sibling invited to the party out of obligation, standing in the corner, all misunderstood and endured. Digital is a vital part of today's communications – in order to prosper, it must be brought into the bosom of the communications family, be made to feel an integrated and loved member of the team. In many instances this won't be without pain – expense, confusion as to the benefit, friction – but failure to work at building a fair and balanced unit will result in a broken communications home. Increase the digitalness of your team, by hiring in social media resource (if you're seeking a job title, communities manager is as good as any), or by putting PR staff through a rigorous digital training programme – good communicators succeed in any channel.

Informed Intuition

INLINE tells us that digital need not always play a role in effective communications. Planning isn't a new skill set within PR, but it is a typically under-resourced one, used as marketing and new business bait, rather than integrated at the heart of the business. If successfully aligned to other core functions of an agency (such as creativity and measurement) planning can deliver enormous value to the efficiency and effectiveness of communications. Add digital into the mix and you have a hugely potent and flexible approach to delivering messages via advocates that make a difference. By monitoring search terms and trends and instantly recycling the insights gleaned it is possible to use informed intuition to create valuable and game-changing PR.

Search Sophistication

Two of the most significant developments in search technology for years have just been introduced – both of which have enormous significance for anyone tasked with promoting or protecting brands online. The first is 'real time' search, which provides live results for search terms, highlighting within the search results page real time conversations and opinion about the term searched for. The implications for issues management are clear and the opportunities to reaffirm positive opinion through broad-base advocacy, huge. The second development is the advent of social search. Simply put, social search prioritises the views and opinions of your social network on topics you're searching for, the idea being that if you are searching for a Japanese restaurant in Paris, a small selection of recommendations from people that you know and like (or that work in the same industry, are the same age etc) will be more relevant to you than tens of thousands of 'traditional' search results. Again, the potential for building and maintaining networks of advocates in this model is significant. Keep a keen eye on search this year – as it develops in sophistication, so the opportunities for communicators will grow exponentially.

Mass Mobile

The launch of the iPad and greater and more rapid developments in other mobile devices means that 2010 may finally be the year the mobile Internet comes of age. Until recently, using the mobile Internet has been much like using the PC Internet in 1995 (dropped connections, twenty minute page-loads etc), but better devices and more ubiquitous Wi-Fi (and the promise of 4G and WiMAX on the horizon) mean that content owners and seekers alike are flocking in increasing numbers to the mobile web. Our recommendation is do not be left behind: searching and browsing are less satisfying and less simple processes on many mobile devices, so users are showing a tendency to stick with sites that serve their needs rather than browse around; and the application environment that works so well on mobile devices again reduces users' predilection to surf around for alternative content. Be there, or be Foursquare.

Twitter TV

At its simplest level, Social TV describes the online discussion and interaction generated by an audience of live TV events. Most prevalent around sporting and entertainment events, Social TV describes the live conversations taking place between supporters of teams or competitors. As it develops, we are seeing the trend move into other circles, notably politics (check out Twitter chat during the UK's Prime Minister's Questions, for example) and current affairs. While the ultimate opportunities for brands are to add value to these conversations as they take place, a simpler approach is to ensure that your spokespeople are active online when you know an issue or company representative is going to be on broadcast TV or radio. Simply alert staff, customers and influencers to the fact it is happening (as simple as telling them when and where) and encourage them to take part.



The Socialisation of Communication in the Middle East.

There are 3.1 million Facebook users in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) area, of which almost a third use the site in Arabic.



Twitter is as much a buzz word in the Middle East as it has been in the rest of the world over the past year. It is not uncommon for news of fires, collapsed buildings and plane crashes to break first on the microblogging service and even the recent presidential elections in Iran came with the 'Powered by Twitter' tag. In a region where the mainstream media is still in a state of evolution, social media has finally caught the public's attention.

A year ago, 'digital communications' meant securing coverage on online news portals such as AME Info, ArabianBusiness.com, Maktoob Business and Zawya, all of which have grown massively in reach and influence. This changed towards the end of 2008 when Twitter was made accessible in the UAE via the internet after being blocked by the country's internet service providers, triggering a tipping point of sorts.

After the first Dubai Twestival, which was covered extensively by the United Arab Emirates' mainstream media, Twitter became über-cool and along with it, social media. Throughout the Middle East, hotels, restaurants, retailers, airlines, consumer technology companies, government entities and even some political candidates in Lebanon rushed to set up profiles on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Their ubiquitous logos now stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other social bookmarking options on most English online news portals.

It is important to note here that a significant percentage of the region's audiences, especially the youth, are no strangers to online media. The region's netizens have long had a choice of using international sites or home-grown channels like Shoof, Maktoob and Ikbis. A 2008 poll of Arab youth by regional research company Maktoob revealed that 65 per cent regard the internet as their primary source of information, while 84 per cent say they base their buying decisions on information they see online. In making the mainstream media sit up and take notice, social media has earned a spot in the Middle East's popular culture.

Unsurprisingly, media companies and entrepreneurs in the region have been quick to adapt and evolve in line with the fast-changing media environment. On a smaller scale, niche social networks catering for mothers, travellers, communications professionals, businesspeople and ethnic groups have sprouted up all over the Middle East's digital landscape.

The surest sign of the growing maturity of the Middle East's digital media space came from regional media conglomerates such as the Abu Dhabi Media Company (ADMC), which began to look at investing heavily in digital media. This year alone ADMC launched a joint venture with a leading Massive Multi-Player Online Game (MMOG) developer and a football portal and invested in VEVO, a new premium music video and entertainment service powered by YouTube.

Even Facebook launched its Arabic offering earlier this year in the hope of capitalising on the market's potential. And why not? There are 3.1 million Facebook users in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) area, of which almost a third use the site in Arabic. Add the Levant and North Africa to the equation and you're looking at a market of 8.4 million users.

Invariably, marketing and communications consultancies have joined the scramble to carve out niches for themselves, while looking at ways to develop and monetise new services. Those that had already brought digital communications professionals onboard and developed a business plan early on were primed to capitalise on the latest trend. Others are still feeling their way along but are learning quickly.

Suddenly, words such as 'dialogue', 'conversation', 'advocacy' and 'community' have found their way into communications plans and new business presentations, a refreshing change for a market where a large amount of communicating revolves around news releases and press conferences.

Challenges still remain in terms of securing client buy-in, not just from a budgetary point of view but because many have concerns that arise from a perception of surrendering control to the online community. Measurement is the other big challenge in a region that relies quite heavily on advertising value equivalents. Accurately demonstrating return on investment is near impossible.

However, we can only be optimistic about the future as social media continues its move into the Middle East's mainstream and the communications industry rides the wave.



Journey to a New Kind of PR in Sweden.

An indication of the Swedish public's wariness of PR and lobbying is the long and difficult debate on regulating lobbyists.

A number of clients have called on Weber Shandwick Sweden over the past year for help with crisis communications. One testing issue we have advised on is the size of CEO bonuses, for example. Although our clients are all different, they share the same expectations of us: to influence media coverage of their situation and lessen negative publicity.

What senior business leaders must realise with situations like these is that communication can accomplish very little if you don't change your behaviour. This is particularly true in a small media market like ours. Sweden has few trendsetting media channels (two morning newspapers, two tabloids, one 'serious' private TV network and no challengers to public radio's news coverage). The room for dissenting voices is as a result quite limited.

Besides having a small media market, I would describe Sweden as a somewhat immature PR market. Compared to other disciplines, PR is still frowned upon by many journalists and politicians alike. As a matter of fact, in a recent poll 'PR consultant' was considered one of the least prestigious jobs, with only the military perceived as worse.

The concrete manifestations of these characteristics are easily seen in Sweden. For instance, it's very uncommon to see a consultant assisting a client directly in an interview situation. Additionally, it's also a regular procedure to coach a client before making a call to a political contact rather than making the call oneself for the client.

An indication of the Swedish public's wariness of PR and lobbying is the long and difficult debate on regulating lobbyists. Some opponents actually argue that a register of lobbyists would make lobbying more legitimate through public recognition – as if the right to put forward a reasoned case in a democracy were a bad thing!

The people of Sweden are noted for their great environmental awareness, trust in public authorities and the widespread belief that 'the Swedish model' (albeit somewhat tarnished in later years) is superior to the welfare system found in most countries. Combined with the limited media landscape, this presents challenges and affects the way PR is conducted in Sweden.

Even though press clippings are – and for the foreseeable future will remain – the bread and butter of our business, accomplishing such a seemingly simple task as media coverage is proving to be ever more difficult today. With few traditional media channels and sceptical journalists, there is only so much space in which the vast number of interest groups and corporations can secure publicity for product and service launches and so forth.

In response, we recommend that clients move PR efforts from purely traditional media outreach to active participation in the surrounding society. If you have an executive bonus issue, you must address the matter at the company level before communicating and responding to the media about it. If you have a problem with climate impact, you must do something about your emissions before trying to change media perceptions.

When your actions mimic your words, powerful communication can result. A good example is set by one of our clients, Max hamburger restaurants (a family-owned business and the second largest hamburger chain in Sweden after McDonalds). In recent years, Max has raised its own climate awareness and taken a number of substantial steps towards sustainability, such as carbon offsetting and carbon labelling on all products on its menu. Max leadership has repeatedly taken part in the public debate, calling on other businesses to assume the same degree of responsibility and thereby to behave as good 'corporate citizens'.

One thing the Max example shows is how consumer PR can extend into public affairs and corporate communications.

The Max case is a prime example of how to brand a consumer service through public participation.

However, this entails a change in the relationships we have with our clients. Yet it is my firm belief that these new sorts of relationship are necessary in order to excel in PR in Sweden.

PR professionals still offer and perform well on the basics, but we have started a journey together with several of our clients where PR is closely knitted into their core business. For such clients, PR has become an integrated part of the business strategy, directed by the top management, rather than being a simple product that the marketing department buys off the shelf.

Meaningful. New.
Productive. Exciting.
Strong. Rich.
Challenging. Trusting.
Fulfilling. Genuine.

Good relationships
are always rewarding.

Winning awards is great, but just as important to us is working closely with our clients to create powerful campaigns that really deliver. Our deep commitment to client service and creativity has led to Weber Shandwick being named Gold Medal Winner by *PRWeek's* 2009 Global Agency Report Card, Agency of the Year at the 2009 European Excellence Awards and recognised as International Consultancy of the Year by *PRWeek* UK and the UK PRCA. Thank you to all of the clients and people across our international network for their magnificent contribution to a challenging but extremely rewarding 12 months. To find out more about award-winning PR, contact Colin Byrne, CEO UK & Europe on +44 (0)20 7067 0191 or cbyrne@webershandwick.com

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Advocacy starts here.