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MANAGING BRAND IN THE SHIFTING MEDIA LANDSCAPE

By Chris Johnson

To say that there have been changes in the media landscape within the last 20 years would be a huge understatement.

Chris Johnson is the CEO and founder of communications and stakeholder relationship management software provider, dna13.

The number of news outlets has significantly broadened to cover every aspect of our lives at home and at work. In addition, the formats in which this content is delivered are expanding. Traditional or mainstream media such as daily newspapers and print magazines are the usual suspects when it comes to accessing news.

Now, with the mass adoption of the Internet and online social media, new avenues have been created to provide people with on-demand information about anything that interests them.

What's driving this on-demand evolution is two-fold: the media's need to remain competitive and find new revenue streams, and people's insatiable desire to connect, discuss and share this information using the Internet to gain a better understanding of the world around them.

Gone are the days when press clippings involved scissors and paste and could be gathered and evaluated the next day or more broadly socialized the following week. In the past, companies would typically receive a transcript 24 hours after the initial publication or broadcast, which from a response perspective, made it difficult to identify inaccuracies before they appeared in later editions or newscasts.

Enterprises now need the ability to capture media coverage as it is being disseminated to avoid a growing gap in information between what is happening online and what is discussed in the boardroom. Real-time electronic clips of broadcast television, online and print news, social media networks and blog mentions all have the potential to directly or indirectly affect a company's stakeholders, reputation and stock price.

Stakeholder managers in media relations, investor relations, public affairs, and government affairs all rely on having access to real-time updates on media and Internet mentions, as well as transparent access to calls and emails on a topic by topic basis across the organization.

While social media, for example, isn't likely to replace traditional media anytime soon, it has the potential to be a force to be reckoned with. According to Internet search engine Technorati, there are more than 175,000 new blogs created daily. These bloggers update their sites regularly, producing over 1.6 million posts per day, or over 18 updates a second.

What is Stakeholder Relationship Management (SRM)?
The means to manage, monitor and measure communications and stakeholder relationships that ultimately impact brand and corporate reputation.



This online evolution and the thirst for real-time information have also changed the way stakeholder relationship managers monitor for media coverage and measure the results of their programs. They need to have a unified view of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to their organization at any given time.

Although blogs are generally the opinions of a single person, all too often, public perception and understanding of an organization is based on the overall impression they have taken from the Internet.

Fostering Community

Today's media is evolving beyond monetizing audiences and more towards fostering dialogue and community – and monetizing these interactions directly or indirectly. Stakeholder relationship managers should see corporate reputation as more than a public relations campaign and more closely assess the overall business opportunities and risks.

While the media has changed tremendously over the past 20 years, so too have the tools that stakeholder relationship managers use have had to adapt. The future of media is about transparency and that translates into viewing stakeholders according to their connection to the organization, their relationship to the issue, and the communication approach. A communications model that effectively prioritizes key interest groups is important.

Progressive corporations need to incorporate a campaign- or issue-centric application to accommodate the information needs of communications employees including high-level executives and geographically distributed departments.

For example, large enterprises have several stakeholder management teams that not only need to streamline campaign management and communications activities, but there is the requirement to manage these campaigns and issues in a more secure and collaborative environment.

Specifically, web-based communications management software, enabling stakeholder relationship and reputation management can help teams accomplish this goal. Technology can enable teams to monitor hundreds of broadcast TV channels, thousands of traditional print outlets, Internet sites and millions of blog feeds. Having a single platform to do this not only simplifies day-to-day activities, but improves the ability to respond to issues by tracking media coverage and inquiries on the Web.

Media mentions are commonly scattered across various media sources, making it increasingly difficult to track and define hits as positive, negative or neutral and send these mentions to the appropriate people who can then act upon the information. Using an integrated, web-based approach like dna13's communication and stakeholder management software enables communications professionals to turn information into action.

Traditionally, PR automation solutions have been geared towards media outreach and monitoring tasks. It's no longer just about media 'hits' – reputation management is shifting towards a single platform for searching across print, broadcast television and Web mediums with the ultimate goal being more positive alignment across all stakeholder groups. The future is about enabling communicators, stakeholder relationship managers and executives to more effectively build brands and manage corporate reputation by delivering up-to-the-minute information in the appropriate context.

Now, more than ever, today's media landscape dictates that corporations use the necessary tools and devise a comprehensive and on-demand strategy to defend themselves from unforeseen damage to their reputation. By eliminating the growing

transparency gap that exists between the Internet and mainstream corporate applications (i.e. email and CRM) systems, savvy organizations can be more proactive in managing and monitoring their reputation.

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Chris Johnson is the CEO and founder of communications and stakeholder relationship management software provider, dna13 (www.dna13.com).

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