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# Rxamble

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Foreword

## The New Age of Communication



**W**hat is the difference between the media landscape of 10 years ago and today –especially from the point of view of communication in business, government and non-profit organizations? Looking at the literature and reports on the media itself, the answer is simple:

media is undergoing a sea change. Technological innovations are progressively helping us dissolve geographical boundaries faster than we could have ever imagined and online communication is proving to be the most cost and time effective channel for our increasing communication needs.

The concept of online communication enables people from around the world to connect to the net, and in the process connect to other citizens from around the world with the help of blogs, RSS and other similar information portals. This allows diverse groups of people who have varied opinions, specialties

and interests to interact freely. Worldwide connection of people and other information resources of different sorts will help the world move forward in developing better-informed solutions. This online phenomenon has permanently changed how companies need to communicate online. Millions of bloggers are actively reporting news, creating a backchannel to the mainstream press. At the same time, blogs are also a tremendous opportunity for organizations both in the private and public sector. They can showcase the people and thought leadership behind an organization via an unfiltered channel. How do these new technologies impact the way we think, feel and communicate? Where do you get started on blogging? We hope this issue will help you understand what is now being called “the new age of communication”.

Aman Gupta  
CEO

## Visible Signs of Life...

# The Change in PR Landscape



The media landscape has changed dramatically in the last decade. There are daily, almost hourly changes in the Internet, along with easily carried mobile technologies and they have had an effect on how we get our news. With speed that was hard to imagine just a few years ago, these technologies are allowing citizens of the world to create, manage, and distribute content (images, stories, video) in a way that was never possible. Much has been written in PR blogs examining whether these changes would hasten the death of the traditional media and PR model. Earlier, a campaign could be placed in one of three vehicles – national TV, big city newspapers or magazines. Now, however, the field has expanded exponentially and comprises global, national, local and highly targeted, special-interest vehicles. Adding to this is the Internet with its duplicity of offerings — the same information found in newspapers and on radio and TV. The Internet also mixes in opinion and gossip at breakneck speed, creating even more chaos and clutter to the communications stage.

“Targeted media, along with a consistent message tailored to each vehicle, is what it takes to make communication effective today.”

Arindam Mukherjee, Outlook

All this has changed not only our news cycle from a day to a few hours to now, just minutes. We haven't reached a point where people are disregarding our major media outlets (television, radio, major newspapers), and we shouldn't expect that to happen anytime soon. However, many do feel that such changes in the media and the proliferation of media outlets have created new trends in the field of communication. These changes are generating the impetus to offer more options for targeting communication messages and expanding the range of their services. One may even call these changes a 'boon' to those who recognize the opportunity. Targeted media, along with a consistent message tailored to each vehicle, is what it takes to make communication effective today.

Today, national TV stations share the medium with syndicated global stations, major and local cable stations and the Internet. As bigger media has gotten less individualized...local news has become even more important than it was. The power has moved from mobilizing nationally to targeting locally. Twenty years ago, we called effective marketing communications 'getting the talk right' among key audiences. Today it's 'marketing buzz' or 'reaching the tipping point'.

**Developing effective communication campaigns... How? Here's what people in the media world have to say....**

The increasing number of media channels doesn't necessarily imply

the need to use all of them together, but it is rather an opportunity to better profile the target. *"Online communication will never be able to substitute print media. It has only managed to change their role and image amongst their readers. This new age information portals only manage to touch the tip of the news/facts/information while the print media actually answers the 4 Ws and 1 H providing a more in-depth perspective of the topic under discussion"*, said Arindam Mukherjee, Outlook.

“Abstruse websites or omnipresent television, the mainline print or the faceless blogs – today news travels @ the speed of thought. That's a given! What is emerging is a fad – a fashion of unravelling “what's behind the news” - a space channels are scurrying to occupy!”

Devdarshan Chakraborty,  
Communication Strategy Specialist

If anything, PR practices will become even more valuable today. The skills unique to the practice of PR continue to be the ones that generate success over time but only if they adopt the new trends. One of the unique services PR provides is bringing clarity to complex subjects — on behalf of the client and on behalf of the media.

According to Mr. Devdarshan Chakraborty, Communication Strategy Specialist,

“Breaking news quickly is important but the inimitable interpretations are the signatures of the iconic celebrities who have started to dominate Indian television. It is this maze of popular opinion mills that PR is able to negotiate and for the better part capitalise. Clearly, the more we see such windows of opportunity the better it is for the craftsmen of spin – after all a piece of news mostly starts with a plug and the twist encourages the rendition, which in turn goes a long way in shaping perceptions.

Many channels also mean a chance to offer perspectives that may not be a favourite with one publication but quite close to the other. It is in such scenarios the smart practitioners will find PR becoming more useful as a tool to build durable and credible image”.

The way PR handles crisis communications is even more crucial today. Strategic counseling has definitely become stronger, as well as everything that has to do with reputation and media relations will always play an important role.

Messaging must be very refined so that it can be placed in a broad range of media. The brand must be totally understood to do this properly. Multi-media channels offer the great advantage of building a more

watertight and more precisely targeted communication system, where disciplines above and below the line frequently go hand-in-hand. What is needed is breakaway creativity to sidestep the clutter.

Blogging has become latest and most popular tool of the trade. Blogs have the potential to help organizations develop stronger relationships and brand loyalty with its customers, as they interact with the ‘human face’ of the organization through blogs. They have been powerful in creating news, affecting opinion or simply supporting an issue and can be greatly used to enhance a media campaign.

The need for and use of research will be essential now. Every plan is based on research and the messaging that comes from the research. Research adds value by providing a better understanding of the investment environment, stakeholders and uses these tools to build a stronger brand image. It also provides expert opinion that facilitates formulation of strategic image building strategies. Research is an important element of working towards building an image, especially in a new market or category. It helps in understanding the market environment better so that appropriate strategies can be developed and delivered.

## Imprimis Resource

### NewsFirst

NewsFirst, the latest service provided by Imprimis Life Pvt Ltd, is designed with an aim to empower clients with latest Information and news, available across the Indian media-print, electronic and web, every morning! It provides comprehensive Intelligence and monitoring services to a diverse set of clients both national and international.

#### It includes:

1. Media Monitoring
  - a. National
  - b. Regional
2. Corporate news distribution and tracking
3. Press Release writing/ editing and distribution service
4. Paid Advertisements

*Many in the industry have welcomed these changes and are beginning to understand and embrace the changing dynamics and where its viewers are getting their news and information. Those who improve upon their existing platforms are the ones who will eventually succeed.*

## Five Steps to a Successful Corporate Blog

1. Read blogs. Who’s already blogging about you? Do a soft launch. Have your CEO or other future bloggers respond in the comments of relevant blog posts.
2. Whoever is blogging needs support, and not from marketing, but from the people who know how to deal with problems .You need a procedure for dealing with insults and threats.
3. Does your firm do anything that makes for good television? Create a blog where your employees can regale readers with stories of the know-how and history that makes your firm special.
4. Look at leaks as failures not specific to blogging. You must clearly mark trade secret information. Recognize that by giving a person a blog, they are one more exit for information. They will be facing customers and the press and need exceedingly clear guidelines. Stamping documents as trade secret, or with release dates becomes necessary.
5. Bloggers increase costs, and increase risks. You need to have a real plan in place. Probably the best way to start out blogging is to start small.

# Does Your Company Belong in the Blogosphere?

Extract from an article by  
Katherine Heires



**S**killful blogging can boost your company's credibility and help it connect with customers.

When Bob Lutz, the vice chairman of product development at General Motors, wants to get quick feedback from consumers on the company's latest product launch, new strategy, or something as specific as the quality of the sheet-metal fits on the latest Chevrolet, he knows where to go: his corporate blog, <http://fastlane.gmblogs.com>.

Lutz is among a small but growing number of corporate executives who have started to experiment with blogs—web-based commentary sites usually written in a first-person, conversational manner—to connect with customers online and advance corporate communications and marketing goals.

Typically, a blog (a contraction of *Weblog*) is created with easy-to-use software that streamlines the process of creating and updating a professional-looking web page, giving users a low-cost platform from which to express their thoughts on a particular subject. Written material made available on a blog is called a post and can be linked easily to other information on the Web, such as other blogs, a company web site, news articles, photo images, or video and audio files. This allows information on a blog to be indexed

and swiftly accessed by popular search engines such as Google or Yahoo and disseminated far more quickly—and, in some instances, far more prominently—than other, more traditional forms of corporate communications.

What Lutz and other executives recognize is that a blog is an incredibly effective yet low-cost way to:

- **Influence the public “conversation” about your company:** Make it easy for journalists to find the latest, most accurate information about new products or ventures. In the case of a crisis, a blog allows you to shape the conversation about it.
- **Enhance brand visibility and credibility:** Appear higher in search engine rankings, establish expertise in industry or subject area, and personalize one's company by giving it a human voice.
- **Achieve customer intimacy:** Speak directly to consumers and have them come right back with suggestions or complaints—or kudos.

What follows is advice from experts to help your company realize the full benefits of blogging.

How bloggers connect: Bloggers are somewhat like constantly circulating guests at a very large cocktail party: They don't all talk directly with one another, but each of them talks to many others, thus forming a richly interlinked network. According to David Sifry, founder and CEO of blog-focused search engine Technorati, there are almost 18 million blogs, spanning over one and a half billion links.

**Take a lead in the conversation:** This ability to engage with others is what gives blogs their power. “Blogs are all about conversations,” says Sifry. A corporate blog allows a company both to keep an ear to the ground to hear what's being said about it and, if necessary, speak up with a correction.

“If you're not blogging, you're missing out on the chance to contribute to the conversation taking place in the blogosphere,” says consultant Debbie Weil, creator of the BlogWrite for CEOs blog ([www.blogwriteforceos.com](http://www.blogwriteforceos.com)).

You're also missing out on the chance to reach the journalists who write about your company for more traditional media outlets: a Euro RSCG Magnet and Columbia University Survey of the Media in 2005 found that 51 percent of journalists view blogs regularly.

**Boost credibility and get closer to customers:** Not surprisingly, many of the early adopters of blogs have been technology companies eager to leverage blogs' ability to position a company executive for recognition as an expert in a given industry or on a specific topic. “Blogs allow us to get our message out to the world in a direct, unmediated, and unfiltered way,” Bray says. Bray, who has been blogging since February of 2003 on tech-related topics, says that blogging allows Sun to write things that “are read directly by people in the software development community without being filtered by journalists and analysts.”

(Extract from the Harvard Management Communication letter)

# Behavior Change and Public Health in the Developing World

By John P. Elder  
Sage publications  
No. of Pages: 144



Focusing on universal public health issues, this book explores what can be done and what the future holds. It introduces students and practitioners to behaviour change theories and applications and details experiences of successful programmes for the prevention and control of the world's biggest killers: malnutrition; respiratory infections; diarrhea; HIV/AIDS; and health problems arising from tobacco consumption and lack of access to family planning. The book explores health communication and social marketing strategies, learning theory, media advocacy and community

development. These behaviour-change strategies are presented in terms of how the theory relates specifically to a particular health or disease issue.

Some of the editorial reviews have applauded Elder for providing health planners in developing countries a thought-provoking guide. "The author is also to be commended for compiling a rich array of success stories that one might want to examine and emulate in the quest to alleviate the developing world's health ordeals."

## About the Author

John P. Elder is professor of Public Health at San Diego State University. He has also been on the community medicine faculty at Brown University. He has worked on child survival, vector control, environmental protection and chronic disease prevention projects in several countries in the Americas, the Middle East, Asia and the Southwest Pacific.

## Public health and spin by Mark Chataway

Does a good communications campaign have any impact on policy? What happens when a communications specialist fails to get science to policymakers and opinion formers? It is important to bring issues to the surface and initiate discussion amongst policymakers, journalists and other stakeholders.

Mark Chataway discusses the role of an effective communication campaign and its ability to influence policy. He cites the example of an HIV/AIDS study and how it failed to generate response or gain visibility. Will the presence of a few good spin-doctors change the way things work? To read the entire blog, please visit the link below:

<http://bcmc.blogspot.com>

## Reach Out

# JAGORI



JAGORI ('AWAKEN, WOMEN') was established in 1984 with the aim of carrying feminist consciousness to a wider audience using creative media. Today Jagori is a training, documentation, communication and resource centre for women and has been working for the last two decades on issues of women's rights with a particular focus on violence against women.

## Safe Delhi Campaign

To address the issue of safety of women in public places, JAGORI has launched a "Safe Delhi Campaign" to give the issue more visibility and to get different groups in civil society to get involved. As part of this, JAGORI is conducting participatory 'safety audits' of various areas in Delhi, including residential areas, shopping centres, government buildings, educational institutions and cinema complexes. The audits are a means to identify 'unsafety' factors in the area, as well as to sensitise participants (who include members of the local community and clients/users of services) to the issue of

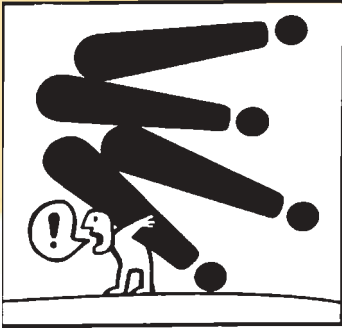
women's safety. Through this campaign, JAGORI aims to mobilise a wide spectrum of public opinion towards action on the above issues.

Women's safety is not an issue that can be addressed only by women, but has to involve the community and citizens of this city. Therefore they are looking towards partnerships with different groups including resident group, NGO's, students, corporates and others. One partnership has been created with CII to look into lighting in public places and gender sensitization training with public transport staff in the city. They have also brought out a Helpline booklet that has information on emergency numbers in the city.

## Contact Jagori :

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# Crisis Communication: How? When? and Why?



**C**risis communication planning can help you deal effectively with those unexpected disasters, emergencies or other unusual events that may cause unfavorable publicity for your organization. Although emergencies by their very nature are unpredictable, it is possible to list and prepare for those potential negative scenarios that might occur during chapter activities. It also is possible to set up a communication system that can be activated in almost any emergency situation.

Before the crisis, successful communication will depend, in large part, on the preparations you make long before the emergency occurs.

- **Have a system in place** - This will allow you to deal with the situation at hand, and not waste precious time

trying to decide how to communicate. An effective crisis communication plan puts you in control of what may be a very volatile and confusing situation.

- **Identify potential crises** - Hold a brainstorming session with key members of the organization to identify those scenarios that might result in unfavorable publicity.
- **Develop policies to minimize crisis situations** - In many crisis situations you will be asked by the media what policies you have on that particular situation. You do not want to be put in the uncomfortable situation of stating that you have no policy.
- **Develop a crisis management team** - Determine in advance a team to deal with crisis communication situations. Assign at least one individual to be a crisis communications team leader and have a back up. Determine a primary and secondary spokesperson to communicate with the media in crisis situations. Give these spokespeople media interview training if possible.
- **Assemble and organize resources** - In a crisis situation you and your crisis communication team will want to have

up-to-date and accessible information. Resource information may include: current list of crisis team members and alternates with work and home telephone numbers.

***Good crisis management calls for open, honest communication with various target audiences.***

## After The Crisis

- **Declare an end to the crisis** - It is most important for your organization to signal an end to the crisis situation.
- **Follow up** - Stay in touch with the community after a crisis, especially with those directly affected. Keep the media informed of any updates in the situation, or let them know the crisis has ended. Review internal policies to try to avoid a repeat of the crisis situation.
- **Have a formal debriefing** - Debrief members of your crisis communication team. Analyze the outcome and the media coverage - both positive and negative. Revise your crisis communication plan to reflect what you have learned.

## About Imprimis Life

Imprimis Life is India's first dedicated Healthcare and Life Sciences communication consultancy focused on products, science & technology and services critical to enhancing life. We are present across more than 14 cities in India. We have unparalleled domain experience in Hospitals and Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals, HIV/AIDS (issues, products, organisations), Diagnostics, Foods and commodities, Biotechnology, Healthcare retailing and others. Our unique proposition lies in our ability to understand and balance the needs of key stakeholder groups. Our clients represent leading companies in the pharmaceutical, consumer health, and life science sectors; as well as patient, professional groups; healthcare providers; and government agencies.

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