

THE TMPR GUIDE TO DIGITAL PR

As technology continues to advance, particularly mobile and smart phone devices, the divide between digital and 'traditional' PR continues to shrink at a rapid pace.

Any potential customer is almost certain to make a web search their first port of call when researching a supplier and your company's digital footprint is there for all to see. Companies that are digitally savvy are turning this to their advantage with the PR team taking the lead. Here, our TMPR experts offer a few pointers.

Search engine optimisation (SEO)

Since Google's recent updates to its algorithm, any decent SEO strategy is based on quality, dynamic, multi-media content including blogs, social media interaction and regularly updated web content. Within any organisation, the PR team is best placed to produce regular quality content and those with successful SEO strategies have PR at their core.

Improved search visibility helps marketing efforts and it can attract analysts, journalists and bloggers researching your industry.

Social media

Understanding social media is an important part of a digital PR effort. The audience a company is trying to reach or influence will spend time on, and being influenced by, social media. Social participation in a digital PR program means connecting with and engaging influencers and customers to perpetuate a positive brand image as well as identifying and empowering brand ambassadors. Proactive optimisation of social media content and building relationships with fans helps dispel negative brand attention and accentuate what's positive. It is essential to be open with and useful to social communities and to adhere to both implicit and explicit 'social rules' rather than just dropping links to what you're promoting.

Digital assets

Digital assets such as video, audio, blogs, pod casts, images and online communities are all essential tools for successful digital PR and will all have a positive impact on SEO. Keywords still have a role to play here to make sure you get the most from your digital assets and sites such as Flickr and Youtube are integral to your strategy.

Blogging

When done right, a company blog can be an incredible PR asset. A company blog is an opportunity for a brand to create and publish its own content to a relevant online audience of key stakeholders and opinion formers. Well-optimised and linked blog posts can rank well in the search engines which makes them easy to find for journalists and bloggers researching stories. Blogger relations is often more successful when the company being pitched has its own blog to point to.

Search and social media monitoring

Producing quality digital content is only half the battle and with all this additional content out there, there is more chance for both positive and negative brand mentions to occur. As with traditional PR, monitoring the result of your digital activity is essential in refining and improving your strategy and there are plenty of tools available to help digital PR practitioners keep on top of the online conversations around their brand. Companies can set up free alerts using tools like Google Alerts, Social Mention or Twitter to watch for mentions of their brand name, competitors' names, industry news and can respond accordingly. Being seen to respond quickly and positively to negative mentions can give your brand a real boost as well as nip any potential crisis in the bud.