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Surveys Say: Public Relations on the Right Track



By Kathy Cripps, President, Council of PR Firms

The news on the economy has slowly but surely become a little brighter over the past few months. Even more bullish have been recent forecasts for the public relations industry.

Two reports in particular published in the past month, one from *Advertising Age* (www.adage.com), the other from private equity firm, Veronis Suhler Stevenson (VSS), portrayed public relations as one of the brightest lights in the media/marketing constellation.

In *Ad Age's* article, "Why the Ad Industry Won't Recover in Second Half," public relations along with online media, was identified as a "pocket of strength."

According to VSS, PR is projected to grow at an annual compound growth rate of 9.2% over the next five years, because "Despite (marketing's) decelerating growth, PR still plays a vital role in the marketing mix, as companies seek new ways to improve their images through both traditional and alternative marketing methods."

A key reason for the positive outlook is the continued growth in social media and the significant role many public relations firms are playing in their clients' work in this area.

And the financial upside is significant, based on finding in the [August 2009 CMO survey](#) conducted by the American Marketing Association and Duke's Fuqua School of Business. Over the next five years, according to the survey, marketers expect to more than triple (!) spending on social-media efforts, increasing social media budgets from 3.5% to 13.7%.

We asked Council Chairman and Ketchum CEO Ray Kotcher to comment on the road ahead for public relations. He said:

"One of the drivers of our industry's future is indeed this revolution in

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communications — the shift from analog, one-way channels to digitally driven, real-time conversations."

(No surprise here, but on the Council's Q2 survey, **100%** of our members reported providing social media expertise to their clients.)

"As our members navigate this profound shift for their firms and for clients, one thing has become apparent: Earned attention, something that has always been fundamental to the public relations value proposition, has become the currency," Kotcher adds. "The challenge for public relations and public relations firms is to protect and advance this unique value proposition and to clearly define and articulate our place in the new world order."

The reports and surveys listed above appear to be pointing toward the success of public relations in this effort. Let's prove them right.

Comments:

Tuesday, August 25, 2009 3:39:09 PM by **Anonymous**

Great piece. When you say "PR still plays a vital role in the marketing mix" can you do so in a way that doesn't imply that it's ONLY in the marketing mix? Too many people who studied marketing don't know the definition of public relations and tend to think of it as a marketing toolbox instead of an approach toward communicating. We all need to work hard to change that perception.

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How do I use RSS?

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