

In addition to having traditional public relations skills, PR pros must be tech savvy. Because not only is social and media relations changing at rapid rates, but the needs of clients are evolving as well.

Clients want PR professionals that have access to tools and resources that measure impact and streamline efforts. It takes time to learn and manage these tools, so working with a professional who is immersed in the technology can be valuable. Plus, the right agency will have already invested in these tools – which means the client doesn't have to.

There are a number of technology tools that help PR professionals perform better:

Must-Have Media Relations Tools

Some tools allow you to build custom media lists to ensure you are pitching the right journalists at the right media outlets. Those such as My Media Info, Cision and Meltwater allow research of media outlets, journalists and bloggers nationwide.

Dozens of journalists search for story sources every day. Tools like Help A Reporter Out, ProfNet and SourceBottle allow PR pros to connect with reporters who are in need of expert sources. Utilizing these tools can help secure valuable media coverage.

Press release distribution services deliver news to a wider audience. Press releases posted on these sites reach millions of consumers and top media outlets worldwide. Distribution services include PR Buzz, PR Newswire and Business Wire.

Track mentions of your brand – and your competitors - in the news and on social media. One of the easiest (and free) ways to monitor what's being said on the web is through Google Alerts. Other options for managing mentions are Meltwater, Hootsuite and Social Mention. Once you have coverage to report, Coverage Book makes it easy to collect and present the media mentions and results of your earned efforts.

Creating and Leveraging Content

Let's face it. Creating great content is good for business. It provides valuable information that is shareable, and it positions companies as thought leaders.

Blogging is one way to create and share content. One of the most popular platforms is Word Press. It's free, user-friendly, and there is no coding or design knowledge necessary. Other platforms include Blogger, Tumblr and Medium. Another way to share original content is by publishing articles on LinkedIn. These long-form posts become part of one's professional profile and are shared with connections and followers.

There are also content syndication tools like Outbrain that place links to content on the web's largest, most respected media properties, helping to drive traffic to those articles and blogs.

Collaboration Tools

When it comes to managing comprehensive campaigns, certain tools ensure that teams collaborate, meet goals and complete assignments and that clients are in the loop on progress. A couple of those tools are Workboard and Smartsheet.

Of course, this is a mere sampling. These days, PR pros are also expected to be skilled in social media management, the creation of images, video and infographics, email marketing platforms and analytics ROI. And there are a plethora of tools out there for those as well.

By: Cresta Lewis

Cresta is VP/Client Services with The Eisen Agency, a premier brand marketing communications firm with offices in Greater Cincinnati and Greater Cleveland. The agency specializes in public relations, marketing, branding, online and experiential marketing.

