

PR, media and social media should all be in the same WhatsApp group

 By [Khangelani Dziba](#)

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The proverbial contestations around the changing landscape of PR have in the last few months yielded much angst amongst PR practitioners, particularly the millennial who has joined the industry towards what I choose to term, *the tail end of what we knew public relations to be*.



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As a millennial myself, I have grown weary of this phenomenon and with it being youth month, I think it is only fair I speak out on some of the solutions I think will aid us towards achieving the job at hand whilst also balancing it with the demands of business unto us at management level at least.

Shift in thinking needed

Public relations is classically defined as the practice of consciously managing the cascading of information between an individual or an organisation and the public. The practice typically includes an organisation or individual gaining exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment.

Ideally, this is how PR should always work but the dynamics have changed and become that much harder when it comes to performing this function for brands. Whether we like it or not, things are just not the same and the job continues to be that of having to educate clients that this is the reality we are working under and a shift in thinking is needed.

This rightfully poses as a threat to the PR model and almost requires a completely reimagined approach. This is not necessarily a solution that is going to come from senior PR actioners who are stuck in their ways of how they used to do things 20 years ago. But more from the very people who have joined the industry in the current state it is in and are aware of the demands and developments taking place in the creative industry as a whole.

These I argue, should be the people sitting together with MDs, CEOs and directors of agencies to create lasting solutions that will not only help meet business objectives but further upskill those that have the potential.

The saving grace of public relations

What am I saying exactly?

Well, it is no secret that the two industries in the ecosystem that have not been deeply affected and are in fact being increasingly looked into are media buying and social media. Media buying is a part of the paid media category and normally means procuring media space and time for exhibiting ad creatives.

When buying media, the aim is to find the right place, time and the context to entrench and land relevant ads to the target audience thereby increasing conversion rates, sales or brand awareness. Social media on the other hand refers to interactive technology mediated platforms that facilitate the creation and sharing of information and other forms of expression.

News flash! Therein lies the saving grace of public relations and the real meaning of what integration means in the era of convergence. Instead of looking at these three entities as different disciplines, they should, in fact, be one body because ultimately, they have the same function around driving conversation, increasing consumer consideration and conversion rates, sales and brand awareness.

PR practitioners should be at the forefront

PR practitioners should be the ones who are there when media buying strategies are being curated, sold to clients and engagements are taking place with media houses to negotiate further how brands can leverage that media spend for PR deliverables. In the same breath, PR practitioners should be on the forefront of creating social media strategies that drive greater conversations for brands and deliver their key messages.

In essence, this is not just a PR practitioner's challenge to solve but one I would further argue CEOs and MDs who are looking at growing their agencies should start looking into urgently. Yes, PR is evolving but what are we doing about it?

This dear colleague I think is a great starting point!

ABOUT KHANGELANI DZIBA

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