

9 key PR trends for 2024

By  Ronelle Bester

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As a service provider, we need to guide our clients with innovative PR approaches and comprehensive marketing and media strategies.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) Ronelle Bester, MD of Red Ribbon Communications, delves into some of the key PR trends anticipated to define 2024

This requires us to have a good understanding of upcoming trends, outdated practices that are no longer effective, and the current hot topics in the industry.

9 Key PR trends for 2024

Let us explore some of the essential 2024 PR trends that will empower PR professionals to excel in the year ahead.

1. AI is essential, but ethical use is key

AI has already made its mark on the media landscape and is here to stay. As a PR professional, it's important to use this disruptive technology ethically and responsibly.

AI-powered tools can help streamline processes such as proofreading, media monitoring, and pitching research.

However, be careful. Tools like ChatGPT and Bard search the entire internet for responses, which means they might give you false or wrong information. Always fact-check and heavily edit any AI-generated content before presenting it to clients or journalists.

Remember, AI programs are like robots. They do not have the same expertise, knowledge, storytelling skills, or emotional intelligence as you do. AI will never replace your role, but it can definitely enhance your skills and agency when used as a tool.



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2. Incorporate data-driven storytelling

There is a noticeable shift towards using data to tell stories. While PR traditionally relies on evoking emotions, the media now wants solid data to back up pitches. It's important to show clear statistics and relevant trend data that connect with the target audience. To get this data, you might use your client's own research or industry studies or do surveys using tools like Pollfish.

But the most important part of this trend is creating a compelling narrative around the data. Instead of just bombarding media contacts with numbers, concentrate on building a complete story that shows how your client can solve the problems highlighted by the data. This approach will be really important for successful PR strategies in the upcoming year.

3. Leverage SEO for PR success

SEO-driven pitches are going to be imperative for data-driven storytelling in the coming year. It's crucial to learn about SEO tools like SEMrush, Google Search Console, and KWFinder. When you use SEO in your pitches, the focus changes to finding a key term that's important for your client, has lots of searches, but is not too hard to rank for.

When you search for this term, you can see what your client's competitors are saying about the same thing. If the search results mostly come from low-traffic, lesser-known websites, you've struck gold. This proactive approach to leveraging SEO will be a game-changer for PR success in 2024.



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4. Implement sustainable practices for audience engagement

There has been a significant shift toward sustainability and diversity practices in the field of PR. While value-based storytelling and socially conscious content have captivated audiences for a while, the focus now shifts to genuine commitment.

Audiences increasingly support brands that wholeheartedly embody these principles. Sustainability is becoming super important. Clients not only want PR support for their initiatives, they also want their core business strategies to be more sustainable.

PR professionals need to help their clients talk about sustainable practices in a real way, not just through superficially diverse and inclusive campaigns. It's important to make sustainable practices part of the whole business, from how they get their supplies to their company culture to connect with conscientious audiences.



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5. Uphold accuracy and credibility

The emphasis on accuracy and credibility will take centre stage in the new year. There is a lot of wrong information and exaggerated stories out there. Maintaining accuracy has become the foremost concern for journalists. In this context, PR professionals must make sure that their pitches are without errors or inaccuracies before sharing.

Careful fact-checking and comprehensive research will be paramount. By prioritising accuracy and credibility, PR practitioners can foster trust and reliability in their interactions with media players, fortifying the foundation for successful PR collaborations.

6. Building lasting relationships with media contacts

In the coming year, journalists will face more challenges in their work. As a PR professional, it is important to continue to build strong relationships with members of the media. It is not just about giving them useful information, but also about making their work easier and their professional lives more manageable. It's important to tailor each pitch carefully to make sure it is accurate, timely, and relevant to the specific journalist and their publication. Sending pitches well before a launch will also help journalists who are short on time.

7. Demonstrating the tangible impact of PR through data

This year it will be important to show clients the real value of PR using clear and measurable data. The focus will be on giving clients solid, measurable proof of success, emphasising the use of concrete numbers. Companies will want to see the actual results of PR work and understand how the resources they invest lead to the results they achieve.

By explaining the impact of PR using statistical evidence, PR professionals can help people who focus on numbers see how PR efforts directly affect important data. This use of data-driven insights helps to show how powerful and effective PR practices are, fostering a comprehensive understanding of their multifaceted impact.



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8. Embracing authenticity and transparency

Now more than ever it is really important for brands to be honest and open with their audience. Building trust with the people who buy from a brand depends on being genuine and truthful in every part of how the brand interacts with them. This means that PR strategies need to match up with the values of the brand, making sure that authenticity is at the heart of everything the brand does.

It is also important for brand representatives to always stick to these values when they talk about the brand because any differences in what they say can quickly make the audience stop trusting the brand.

Relating to the audience is a big part of this trend too, so brand founders need to be open and easy to connect with, like influencers. Using natural, unpolished videos and podcast interviews to show the brand authentically is key to making these connections with the audience. By embracing these genuine, unfiltered mediums, brands can forge deeper connections and resonate more authentically with their audience.

9. Unearthing compelling short-form narratives from social media

The upcoming year will spotlight the significance of telling interesting stories in a short and catchy way, both in text-based content and video formats. Social media, especially TikTok, will be a great place to find new trends and short, impactful ideas that can be turned into great pitches.

Also, getting involved in social media provides content ideas tailored for platforms like LinkedIn. In this environment, journalists are actively looking at social media for interesting stories, just like PR professionals use it to find inspiration for pitches.

Using clients' social media to show off their brand and share important unique ideas with the media will be important.

Mixing valuable information with interesting storytelling has the potential to yield substantial media coverage, underscoring how powerful this approach is for securing press opportunities.

In the fast-paced PR landscape, staying at the forefront of industry developments is paramount for crafting impactful strategies and consistently delivering great results for our clients.

Proactively embracing the emerging trends of 2024 is vital for agencies striving to thrive and expand in the coming year.

ABOUT RONELLE BESTER

Ronelle Bester, MD of Red Ribbon Communications, started her career in technology at Dimension Data as marketing manager of the Western Cape. She has a BTech degree in public relations from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and has lectured in public relations at both the University of South Africa and Varsity College. Email Ronelle at ronelle@redribboncommunications.co.za, read her blog and follow her on Twitter at [@ronelle](https://twitter.com/ronelle).

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