

How PR has changed during the pandemic: Varun Bhardwaj, Madison PR

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How PR has changed during the pandemic

By Varun Bhardwaj, Associate General Manager, Madison PR, Delhi.

The Pandemic has disrupted and upended everyone, and no country or society has been spared. This time, it's a democratized thing; the young & old, rich & poor and the east & west are all impacted alike. It's difficult for everyone to understand the magnitude of Pandemic. It turned out to be a Black Swan event that has affected the world, including Public Relations and many sectors worldwide.

Pandemic turned us into thoughtful communicators

Considering the importance of public relations and looking at the allocated internal and external budget, the Public Relations industry did better than everyone thought, addressed the challenges and risks, and seized the opportunities that did help the professionals through communication. Moreover, we also witnessed that the organizations have become more competitive, whether competing for capital, policy, consumers, human resources, natural resources, etc. The enormity of change in the absence has been rapid, and one might say the PR as a profession has taken a quantum leap on both the client and agency sides during the Pandemic.

Dexterous PR Activities

As mentioned earlier, the Pandemic has completely changed the role and responsibilities of public relations. We have also introduced numerous twists and turns in the traditional PR tools. Mass plunging and press releases became very targeted, refined and innovative, often with a personal touch.

Using Influencers and Micro-Influencers

Undeniably influencers and micro-influencers have become the new buzz in the marketing industry, and their role is enormously increasing day by day. Looking at the fame of social media, every user of social media impacts others. We have also noticed that followers and their friends always pay attention and participate in the endorsements done by their close friend groups, opinion leaders and family. And this feeling of having a close relationship with opinion leaders always goes in favour of brands and organizations alike. During the covid-19 Pandemic, people searched for real experiences from trustworthy and accessible sources to solve their problems. Conveying messages through influencers is a brilliant and convenient way of reaching the public in this Pandemic.

Emerging new online communities

Online communities to share views and experiences about brands also flourished and became an online source of word of mouth. Looking at the rise of a new social media platform such as Club House. The brands that took the leverage to use this app during the pandemic also ramped up their PR strategies. Being a new social media app rooted in voice and audio communication, Clubhouse helped brands be heard and develop brand equity during tough times.

News jacking in a mindful way

Many PR pros used a strategy called "news jacking," which subtly tied their clients' stories to the day's news. The audiences might see this as a microcosm of a broader critique of our industry, but at that moment, it was helpful for the journalists who were writing for multiple beats. Furthermore, it was also a daunting task for the PR Pros to secure coverage for the brand, catching the journalists' attention tastefully and serving the broader public in times of crisis.