

PR still remains relevant in a digital world

By [Lola Lazarus](#), issued by [Bullion PR & Communication](#)

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Since the dawn of the fourth industrial revolution in 2015, digitalisation has grown to be one of the most powerful platforms for companies to do business. You are effectively losing business if you do not have an attractive and informative website.

The influence of digitalisation has also spread into marketing. Digital channels, specifically social media platforms, have become significant tools that businesses are leveraging to market their products and services.

However, while social media has plenty of advantages, and there is a natural gravitation towards platforms such as Instagram, I feel that good old-fashioned PR still remains relevant in a digital world.

The case for social media

Social media has grown significantly since the early days of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Consider what takes place online every minute in 2023. There are 5.9 million Google searchers per minute, 2.1 million users accessing their Facebook accounts, and 66,000 photos and videos posted on Instagram.



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Platforms like Instagram and Facebook offer significant advantages to the public as it is an easy and efficient way to search for a company and access its range of products that can be easily consumed through the Instagram store or Facebook Marketplace. These platforms also offer significant advantages to businesses as they create a platform that allows them to have direct access to their customer base. Social media platforms are also a cheap and efficient way to engage directly with customers. This will help them when it comes to product development.

The case for PR

While social media is important, brand relevance goes beyond the products and services that you provide to your customers. Environmental and social governance has become a major talking point and is a non-negotiable topic with modern consumers.

Research shows that modern consumers care about ESG and major brands' investment in advancing this within their business. They want to partner with brands that invest in their communities and invest a certain portion of their profits in social development programmes.

This is where the power of PR comes to the fore. One of Bullion's major clients is a provider of distance education. The client recognised that there is a fundamental shift in the South African education space whereby students want to feel more empowered when making the decision to further their education. They embarked on a significant campaign to improve their social development programmes within key communities to arm students with the information that will help them make the decision to further their education.

Another key client is the custodian of fraud prevention in South Africa. In a country where the public is increasingly falling victim to fraudsters and scams that turn them into victims of fraud, it is important for these companies to build and develop narratives that informs the public about the current trends when it comes to fraud and how they can avoid becoming a victim.

A balanced approach

It is becoming increasingly clear that companies not only need to embrace social media platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest (which are visually driven mediums), they need to embrace other social media platforms that will allow them to incorporate PR-styled narratives.

I recently read an article by Hootsuite that discusses some of the key advantages that social media can offer businesses. One of the biggest advantages is the ability to humanise your brand. The article points out that the ability to create real human connections is one of the key benefits of social media for business. Introducing users to the people who make up your company and showcasing how existing customers are using and benefiting from your products is a key way that PR can make a difference to your brand.

Additionally, the Hootsuite article points out that clients want to spend their money with and use the services of companies that know what they are doing and who are thought leaders in their field. This is the core purpose of PR, as discussed in the previous section. Finally, PR narratives allow brands to remain top of mind.

I feel that brands need to adopt a hybrid approach when it comes to using social media to leverage their brand presence and identity. PR narratives can still add significant value in a digitised world.

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