

Gen Z: The one to watch in your PR strategy

By  Karabo Ledwaba

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PR specialist and founder of PRLab, Matías Rodsevich shares his top three marketing trends that we will see in 2023 and beyond.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Rodsevich was speaking at Meltwater's *PR Trends to keep an eye on in 2023* webinar. Gen Z, technology and social responsibility are the key trends which will be the focus of PR professionals this year.

1. Gen Z keeps entering workforce

Rodsevich said Gen Zs are acquiring more purchasing power as they continue to enter the workforce and this makes them a key consumer group on which to focus.

Gen Zs tend to be more liberal-leaning, which means they will support causes that are based on human rights, such as gay marriage, racial equality, gender diversity and the freedom of pronouns.

He added: "These are very important causes for this generation and transparency is a key value for them when engaging with brands. They expect brands to be transparent and to be socially responsible. So they are very observant and critical of

rainbow- and green washing, and they tend to cancel brands. There is a study that says weekly there is one third of Gen Zs who cancel brands which means they unfollow or block brands on their social channels."



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Rodsevich said this generation is also more likely to be influenced by influencer marketing. They pick authenticity and humour when they pick an influencer to follow.

Gen Zs' attention spans are shorter and they use their phones more than other generations, meaning they engage with content differently.

"Their phones are seen as an extension of themselves and not as a device, which means they prefer content that is engaging. Long-form written content is not their preferred type of content and they engage better with video and pictures."

One current trend is that Gen Zs are influencing how search engine platforms operate.

"About 40% of Gen Zs go to Instagram and TikTok instead of Google to search on restaurants to go to eat and products they want to buy. And Google is now tweaking its algorithms and the way it operates to endorse TikTok videos as well because they know the younger generation prefer this type of content instead of articles, they want information in an engaging way," said Rodsevich.

He said a key strategy for brands to attract more Gen Zs is to improve their interface like creating a virtual reality map.

"Leading brands are tweaking their interfaces to make Gen Zs engage better," he said.

2. ChatGPT - a game changer

Rodsevich said its very important to be wary of the pessimistic approach to AI and that it is unlikely to affect employment in PR and marketing.

"I personally don't think it will replace our jobs because search engines, especially Google's algorithm still prefers authenticity in terms of content. And ChatGPT cannot create content that does not exist on the web. We can leverage this tool to make our jobs more efficient, which means we can create content by using AI and then having a human improving or tweaking that piece of content instead of creating it from scratch," he said.



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Instead, PR will be using AI because it is becoming a more predominant tool across different departments. "AI can enhance the day to day work we do to help us focus more on strategic level decisions," he said.

Rodsevich concluded it is important to delegate tasks to technology that is here to stay.

3. Social responsibility walking the talk

"The social influence of brands is what will build brand loyalty and advocacy. It's very important to pay close attention to our

social-responsibility activities from the marketing and PR perspective,” said Rodsevich.

But consumers are expecting brands to focus their charity work on specific human rights' work that can be measured. They want a specific cause in a specific country that affects a specific group.

How can we build better relationships with journalists?

Rodsevich said it is important for PR professionals to think like journalists before pushing for their content to be used.

“If we want to change the way journalists look at PR strategies we need to think as journalists. This is something we have not done in a long time. Because of pressure, a lot of PR professionals only push stories that are only relevant for the brand.”

Frida Fors Wallsbeck, marketing manager of Nordics at Meltwater said marketers need to understand what the value of their content is to an audience, and what the bigger picture is in terms of news and industry.

“You need to sell the bigger picture and see the bigger theme,” said Fors Wallsbeck. “Do these stories add value to an audience? Or is it only valuable to me because it will sell more?”

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

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