

the hungry mind

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To Tweet or Not to Tweet?

by Claire Burke

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by Sean M. Lashley

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by Eric Stein, MS RD

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by Jamie Tiampo

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by Wendy Watkins, Chair, PRSA, Food and Beverage Section

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The rapid growth of social media — Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. — offers incredible opportunities to build stronger and more meaningful relationships among consumers, products and brands. It also poses new challenges in terms of what to say, when to say it and who should say it.

Currently, the biggest debate seems to be around “who should say it.” With budgets being slashed, many disciplines are trying to carve out a piece of the resources and dollars allocated to the social media pie. While advertising and multimedia agencies have great technical experience, it’s important to remember that social media is about dialogue.

Public relations and corporate communications specialists have the requisite skills and experience required to manage this key aspect of social media campaigns. In addition, public relations professionals have expertise in two-way communications and crisis management, making them uniquely qualified to take the lead in facilitating and managing dialogue among media, consumers and influencers.

While there are many examples of food and beverage companies successfully using social media, PepsiCo, The Coca-Cola Company and Dunkin’ Donuts to name a few, most in our industry are just starting to dabble in it. For companies large and small, it poses legal and logistical challenges that need to be addressed. There are no set rules to follow, so everyone is starting from scratch. Companies are now moving quickly to create corporate policies and user guidelines that will help drive their social media efforts.

“At Arby’s, we have an integrated team developing our social media positioning and guidelines,” said Kathy Siefert, director, public relations, Arby’s Restaurant Group. “Public relations will play an important part in our social media efforts.”

The same is true for most of the food companies I reached out to regarding social media guidelines — “In the works” or “under development” was the common response. Companies view social media as a competitive advantage similar to other

marketing tools.

There are a few rules for social media that everyone seems to agree on. Communicators should:

Keep It Real – Authenticity is a must in social media. Marketing jargon, sales pitches and copycatting are severely frowned upon.

Be Consistent – Social media is truly a 24-hour news and information cycle. To be effective, you need to be engaged. Social media is an ongoing commitment and should not be started one week and stopped the next.

Ready Your Rapid Response – Be prepared and have a plan in place to reply instantly to issues, opportunities or messages that require follow up or you could do more harm than good.

Claire Burke is a partner at Hunter Public Relations. She and her team specialize in food and beverage communication programming for a wide variety of clients. She can be reached at cburke@hunterpr.com.

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Hello, Oprah. It's Me, Sean.

Connecting with Media through Social Networking

by Sean M. Lashley

Chances are you already have a Facebook page documenting your every move. You're likely tweeting for your company, your clients, or to let your friends know about that amazing five-course meal you ate last Friday night. (There's nothing like the power of Twitter with chocolate!). And you probably have AOL or Yahoo! Instant Messengers installed on your desktop to chat with colleagues, family and friends throughout the day. But are you using these social networks to take your media relationships to the next level? Are you leveraging the power of technology to become better acquainted or, dare I say it, FRIENDS with your favorite outlets, editors and producers?

When I started in the business six years ago, I had the ability to travel to New York or Los Angeles a couple of times each year to network with my media contacts. I was able to pick-up the tab for a cup of coffee or a moderately priced dinner as a means of networking. Today, it's hard to justify my travel to staff a media interview much less take a trip solely for the purpose of networking. And expensing drinks on the corporate account? Forget about it! But that doesn't mean I don't have the ability to network with my media contacts, it just means that I have to get more creative and spend a little bit more time on the Internet surfing the pages of my Facebook friends and those I follow on Twitter.

That's right. In the world of this PR guy, social networks aren't just for fun. They are the virtual lifeline that keeps me connected

to the lives and interests of my media friends. And while sifting through photos, posts, links and tweets doesn't make up for time spent bonding over a gourmet meal, fine wine or smooth cup of Joe, it does help to further the bond of friendship by giving me a sneak peek into the lives of those I pitch. How else would a publicist in St. Louis know that his New York morning show contact attended the baby shower of one of the show's on-air correspondents, that his New Jersey business broadcast contact goes boating on the weekends in the Hudson with another media contact from a different network, or that his Chicago talk show producer is as obsessed with her dog as he is with his?

While it may come up in a conversation from time-to-time, the truth is, verbal pitches leave little time for pleasantries if the relationship isn't already formed. So, interacting via Facebook or following along via Twitter helps to create conversation and lead to friendlier, casual relationships. And when those casual relationships peak, the use of instant messenger (IM) software can help determine the best time to call your media contact to discuss story opportunities, saving wasted pitches made to voicemail, or catching media during a time that just isn't conducive to receiving your pitch.

However, social networks and IM also must be used with caution. Keep in mind the following five rules of the interactive road:

1. Don't begin "friending" every journalist

you've ever heard of just because you can. Save social networks for those individuals with whom you already have a good working relationship.

2. When "friending," always include a note of introduction with your request. Take it from one with over 1,000 friends on Facebook: I may not remember your name immediately, and I certainly won't recognize your face if we've never met. Take the time to introduce yourself and remind me of our interactions.
3. Take things slowly. Commenting on wall posts is great but there is no need to comment on EVERY wall post. Treat your media contact like a friend. Open yourself up and respond when appropriate. Your cool, casual demeanor will likely be rewarded in the long term.
4. Create lists and only share appropriate links, images and information. While you want to build a more intimate relationship with your media friends, you need not open the kimono so wide that you reveal there's nothing underneath.
5. Never, under any circumstances, pitch a media contact via Facebook, Twitter or Instant Messenger unless you've been invited to do so. These social networks are for keeping in touch, building relationships and sharing information. Leave the work for other channels of communication.

Just like a good meal with great conversation, there's no substitute for a face-to-face meeting. But if you're cash strapped — or just looking for ways to extend your media relationships between those all-too-infrequent social occasions — try joining the social networking revolution and take the time to really get to know the person on the other end of that email or phone line. You never know what you may find out!

Sean Lashley is a senior vice president in the marketing communications practice group at Fleishman-Hillard's corporate headquarters in St. Louis, MO. He is also global co-director of Fleishman-Hillard Entertainment, a specialty area that specializes in the intersection between corporate America and the entertainment industry – with special attention paid to earned national media placements, product placement and branded integration.

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Eat The Rainbow Every Day

by Eric Stein, MS RD

Making a conscious effort to include foods of every color in your diet is one of the best decisions you can make when choosing a healthy lifestyle. The nutrients found in plants, often referred to as phytochemicals, have various functions in keeping our bodies healthy and strong. Phytochemicals are non-nutritive plant chemicals that may help protect our bodies and prevent certain types of disease. Some studies suggest they also have the ability to increase metabolism, reduce the risk of certain types of cancers, and help to keep the digestive system functioning properly.

To better understand why including a variety of color into your diet is important, let's first examine some of the benefits of phytochemicals. Many phytochemicals promote antioxidant activity that protects our cells against oxidative damage and reduces the risk of developing certain types of cancer. Some phytochemicals trigger protective enzymes, while others block various metabolic pathways associated with the development of certain types of diseases. Certain phytochemicals also have strong anti-bacterial activity, anti-inflammatory effects and/or immune boosting and metabolism stimulating properties.

Now that there is a better understanding of why it is important to fuel your body with a variety of fruits and vegetables, let's focus on how each color pigment contributes to better health.

BLUE/PURPLE: The bluish-purple color component found in most berries is known as anthocyanin. Anthocyanidins are antioxidant compounds that have been linked to improved blood flow. Anthocyanins also contain many

different flavonols, which have been found to have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer effects in lab studies. The phytochemicals found in red wine may have the most widely recognized health benefits of all antioxidants in these foods. Commonly associated with red wine, this compound may help reduce the risk of heart disease and certain types of cancers.

GREEN: Chlorophyll is the green color pigment in plants and algae. This color pigment is associated with plants' ability to obtain energy from light through photosynthesis. Green leafy vegetables contain many phytochemicals including indoles, isothiocyanates and flavonones. Indoles and isothiocyanates are antioxidants found in vegetables like cabbage, broccoli and kale. They are largely believed to have strong anti-cancer properties.

RED: Betalain comes from the name for the common beet (*Beta vulgaris*). This red color pigment may occur in any part of the plant. Some are found in the skins, stems and leaves of vegetables, the flesh of some fruits and even the petals of flowers. They are highly recognized for having detoxifying effects on the blood, as well as possible anti-fungal properties.

YELLOW: The yellowish orange color pigments contained within most fruits and vegetables are known as carotenoids. Carotenoids are fat-soluble phytochemicals with strong antioxidant and anti-cancer properties. The most abundant carotenoids found in foods include alpha-carotene, beta-carotene, beta-cryptoxanthin, lutein and lycopene. In the body, alpha-carotene and beta-carotene are converted from food into the active form of vitamin A. Beta-

carotene is a precursor to Vitamin A which has been linked to maintaining healthy vision and immune function, as well as skin and bone health. Lutein may prevent and slow macular degeneration, reduce the amount of free radical damage to the eyes, and help prevent the formation of cataracts. Lycopene is linked to reducing the risk of heart disease and reproductive cancers.

WHITE: White foods are often mistaken as having no health benefits, but this could not be further from the truth. The phytochemicals in foods with white color pigment have very strong anti-cancer, anti-microbial, and cholesterol lowering effects. These substances are strongest in raw onions, garlic and leeks.

Remembering the mantra "Eat the rainbow everyday" will help ensure that you are receiving the many health benefits that are discussed above. A diet with diversity of color will help improve overall health. Try to include at least two to four servings of fruit and three to five servings of vegetables in your diet every day. Then, enjoy the nutritional benefits of the rainbow on your plate!

Wellness Chef Eric Stein, MS, RD, is a chef instructor in the College of Culinary Arts at Johnson & Wales University in Denver, as well as the owner of Enlightened Flavors, LLC, a food and nutrition consulting company providing services to consumers, spas, restaurants and hospitals. Please visit www.wellnesschef.com or email him at estein@wellnesschef.com to learn more.

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Working with Food Photographers and Stylists

by Jamie Tiampo

Food photography is one of the most highly specialized disciplines. It requires knowledge of the technical and creative skills of photography as well as a deep understanding of food, its cultural context and how it behaves on set. Food photographers often work closely with a food stylist, who is responsible for preparing the food to be photographed and who plays a key role in the creative process.

Using great photography and video is the key to high-impact campaigns that draw in an audience to receive your message, whatever the medium. While no one can guarantee you a great image, working with a professional food photographer and stylist can certainly improve your chances of success.

Depending on your project, you should seek professional photographers and stylists who are familiar with the technical delivery requirements for publication, including magazines, online video, books, newspapers and television. As part of your evaluation, you can view portfolios online to see examples of the type of work and style of different photographers and stylists.

When planning almost anything involving still or moving images, it is important to identify and understand the type of images to represent your project. Are there specific concepts, product features, benefits or even emotions you want to convey? What cultural norms, such as chopstick placement, should you respect? How will you address your audience, and what messages are the most important to communicate? What is the demographic profile of your consumers, and how will they respond to different images and styles?

Having a detailed project description with scope, visual concepts and a budget will help your photographer provide more accurate time and financial estimates. Pricing considerations may include whether the shoot will take place on location or in a studio, staffing (stylists, assistants, technicians, scouts), pre-production planning, special equipment, scripting, permits, post-production work and lead times.

Before your job starts, make sure you have a clear concept of what you would like to shoot. Discuss your ideas with your photographer and stylist. A typical estimate should include an overall description of the project, a selection of portfolio images for each medium requested, a description of deliverables, a project timeline for



Photo courtesy of seefoodmedia LLC

completing the assignment, a licensing agreement, usage rights and pricing.

Professionally produced food photography and video gives your marketing and public relations campaigns a polished look, capturing the attention and imagination of your audience. Poorly executed food photography can make your communications fade into the noise at best, and insult or repulse viewers at its worst. Hiring a professional food photographer and stylist is the best way to create unique, impactful images that help you communicate your message.

Jamie Tiampo is the president of seefood media LLC (www.seefoodmedia.com) and host of the eatTV.com online video series. seefood media provides food photography and video production services to food brands, agricultural boards and publishers. He is currently chair of the International Association of Culinary Professionals, Food Photographers and Stylists Section.

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Food and Beverage

by Wendy Watkins, Chair, PRSA, Food and Beverage Section



As many of you may know, each Section is responsible for creating a Professional Development Session at the International Conference. This year, the Food and Beverage Section's program is focused on "Building a Global Brand by Doing Good." I want to share a story or two about a new activism that has emerged translating into some truly remarkable stories of companies and people in our industry finding unique and memorable ways to

make an impact on their communities and our planet. We all understand the importance of causes related to hunger and sustainability, but sometimes it's simple engagement that can have the biggest effect on a brand.

Earlier this summer, Delaware North, my employer, helped the local Boys and Girls Club create an urban garden. For months, club members watched the vegetables, ranging from corn and potatoes to squash and pumpkins, fill the small patch of land. These kids had very little firsthand knowledge of where the food they eat comes from. Now, they are eating food they grew. What a great story to tell.

A similar tale unfolded at Katchkie Farms in Columbia County, N.Y., this summer. The farm is the brain child of a dynamic entrepreneur Liz Neumark, owner and CEO of Great Performances, a large and innovative catering company in New York. The farm is

home to The Sylvia Center, an educational nonprofit organization that introduces children to the pleasures and benefits of healthy food through farm visits and cooking workshops. Recently, the farm hosted 45 children, ages 5 to 17, who are residents of three New York homeless shelters. The shelters don't have food or nutrition programming, yet the children were fearless about tasting food from the fields.

These events made me reflect on the fact that as public relations professionals, we are in a unique position to use our products and services to educate, inform and inspire. The above events were not intended to generate press or buzz. They focused on the act of doing something good, yet they inadvertently are receiving significant attention and coverage. Sometimes, it's not the big event or the elaborate product launch that garners the most attention. Sometimes, it's the simplest acts of kindness, philanthropy and doing something good for someone in need that can make a company's reputation shine the brightest.



Photos courtesy of Katchkie Farms

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MarCom Chair's Column

by Allison Beadle, Co-Chair, IACP Marketing Communicators Section



In my last column, I solicited input about how your eating patterns have changed over the past 12 months. Remember? Well, I received some great responses. You'll find that our changes in eating patterns mirror the consumer trends we follow:

- Buy locally more often
- Eat out less
- Pay close attention to ingredients lists on packaged foods
- Choose more "whole foods"
- Cut back on salt
- Choose organic products when available

- Recycle food containers to cut back on packaging waste
- Try to eliminate added sugar
- Cook at home more
- Experiment with ethnic flavors in home-cooked meals

Granted, my research had a small sample size, but what does this tell us? For me, it was a good reminder that our own eating, shopping and cooking behaviors are often the best places to look for consumer trends. Each of us could probably write an article on 2010 food trends just by acknowledging our own food trend barometers.

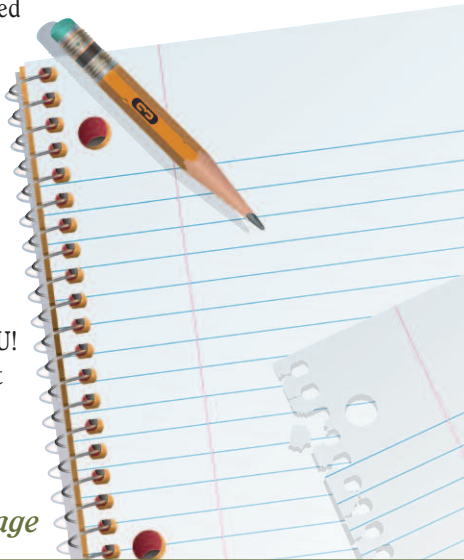
And that brings me to a **CALL TO ACTION** for this column (if you can't tell already, I had a lot of fun with the last one). **Send me an email about your business practices over the past twelve months. Have they changed? If so, how?** Again, interpret this request as you will, but there's no doubt that we've all had to switch gears a little bit in order to survive and (hopefully) thrive in this economy. Email me now before you forget: allison.beadle@fleishman.com.

I'll go ahead and get this process started: I've gained a whole new level of respect for the value of collaboration. In many ways, it's the key to creative problem solving, staying positive and making progress. *The Hungry Mind* is an excellent example of collaboration — our very own section members collaborating with each other and members of other sections to bring timely content to our members.

The MarCom section is an excellent place to collaborate. And if you're reading this, I'd like to encourage you to get more involved. **WE NEED YOU!** Please email Kim Bedwell or me to learn about great opportunities to collaborate with MarCom peers.

Cheers!

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2010 IACP Cookbook Awards

Calling all cookbook authors, editors, publishers, photographers and stylists!

Deadline to submit your cookbook is October 28, 2009. Guidelines and the entry form are available at www.iacp.com.



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For more information about membership, please contact IACP at 1-800-928-IACP or www.iacp.com and PRSA at 1-800-WER PRSA or www.prsa.org.

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