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COVID-19: What Communications Lessons Can We Learn from This Crisis?



The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly turned the business world upside down. Communications professionals have had quite the challenge laid before them.

Despite a constantly changing business environment, regional and cultural differences, and a variety of other obstacles that have come their way, communications professionals have been working harder than ever behind the scenes to keep employees engaged, informed and hopeful.

Communications professionals have done all of this while facing the same fears and uncertainty, anxieties about protecting their families, adjusting to their new work from home environments and, for some, also serving as home school educators, IT managers and so much more.

It has certainly been a lot to juggle and yet they have risen to the occasion in so many ways.

For that reason, we salute our communications colleagues and partners around the globe, especially our client contacts at the following companies with whom we are proud to work for and with: 1stMILE LLC; Adient; BASF Refinish; Cooper Standard; Freudenberg Sealing Technologies; KIRCO; Munro & Associates; Rolls-Royce Power Systems MTU brand; SAE International; Schaeffler Group; and Yanfeng Automotive Interiors.

In this ongoing, marathon-like crisis, which is likely to stretch out for weeks and perhaps months, we all need to celebrate our successes along the way, and increase our resolve to help our organizations to continue to move forward: [click here for the full article](#).

Planning for the New 'Normal'

Written by our PRGN partner Sara Pearson, CEO and founder at Spider PR, London, England

Post lockdown what sort of world awaits? For sure it is never going to be the same again. We will all carry the scar of this extraordinary time in our lives and we will have to learn to live a new 'normal'. Critically, crisis-buying patterns during the outbreak will inevitably speed adoption of new, permanent behaviour change.

Where once the likelihood of swapping a favourite brand for another (especially, own label) would be highly unlikely for most consumers in the key demographics of ABC1, 25-34 age group, it will not necessarily be so in the future. As we have witnessed in recent times, need for a product in a challenging retail landscape where choice has been replaced by what's left on the shelf, has meant most shoppers have been prepared to settle for alternatives to their favourite brands.



Going forward the focus for brand owners is to recognise that an automatic return to old shopping habits should not be assumed and that patterns of consumerism may have permanently changed. Therefore brands, more than ever, need to reinforce their key messages and communicate them in a way that reflects the new world order.

[Click here to view the full article.](#)

PRGN Coronavirus Resources

PRGN has created a coronavirus resources page, a collection of blogs and content related to COVID-19 from all of its partner agencies. Updated almost daily with new content, you can find all resources here: <https://www.prgn.com/prgn-resources-for-coronavirus/>.

Check Out Our Latest "Meet the Media" Profiles

Have you seen the latest "Meet the Media" features on our blog? Twice each month, we profile a key journalist that covers our clientele. Here are the latest posts:



[Steven Ewing](#), Managing Editor at CNET Roadshow

[Dan Roth](#), Producer & Co-host of Wheel Bearings

[Paul Eisenstein](#), Publisher & Editor-in-Chief of TheDetroitBureau.com

[Don Loepp](#), Editor of Plastics News

[Chad Kirchner](#), Automotive Freelance Reporter

[Lee Teschler](#), Executive Editor of Design World & EE Worldonline

Munro & Associates Tears Down Tesla Model Y SUV

LeanDesign® and benchmarking experts at Munro & Associates and its CEO Sandy Munro are currently sharing step-by-step videos that explore the design and manufacturing secrets uncovered by their Tesla Model Y teardown.

Interested in checking it out? Visit the Munro News page to follow along with Sandy's discovery process [here](#). The news updates offer regular insights from Sandy, interactive data and reports, and links to the livestream from Munro's headquarters.



Our PRGN Teammate in London

Spider is a London-based PR, Digital Marketing and Social Media agency. Founded by the CEO, Sara Pearson, in 1990, the agency comprises a team of 40 and a turnover of \$8 million.

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The key element to the success of the business is that the agency has anchored itself to a principle of total accountability to its clients.

Sara began her career as a journalist on a national newspaper and knew only too well the inconvenience of receiving poorly presented stories from PR agencies hoping to persuade her to use their information.

Coupled with her experiences as a brand owner (she acquired the European licence for a mouth rinse with unique properties and turned it into the second best-selling brand in the UK behind Listerine) she knew only too well the frustration of not getting guarantees on her PR investment - even though it was her own PR company!

These two factors convinced her there was a better way to run an agency, one which gave clients absolute clarity on their return on investment - **GUARANTEED!**

She modeled the business on the theory that good PR executives should know whether a story will sell well and therefore it is perfectly possible for them to commit to an expected return. On that basis the outcome can be guaranteed, with a fee penalty put in place in the event the guarantees are not met. Not surprisingly this is very popular with companies and CFOs, in particular!

All sorts of good things come out of this model both for the agency and the client. Firstly, Spider never takes on business if it doubts its ability to be able to communicate the key messages. Secondly, clients have no need to worry if they haven't heard from the agency for a day or so because with the guarantee in place, they **KNOW** the agency cannot slack.



Since the beginning, PR has always suffered from a reputation of being an imprecise marketing science. The Spider way delivers an unarguable proposition in which the agency knows what it is selling, and the client knows what it is buying. Rarely is there any discussion on results because the client has signed them off at the outset.

And, of course, the obvious question is - how often we do we have to give back money. The answer is never! Not because we give low guarantees, but because we never take on a client where we doubt the deliverability of our results.

When digital and social emerged, it was obvious this was the future. Spider did not try to extend the workload of its PR team, instead recruited specialists in order to provide first class expertise.

In 2020 40% of the total team is now purely in digital and social and this includes content providers, community managers, social advertising, influencer management, SEO, videography, copywriters and designers.

And, gosh, how much we love the science of digital and social - measurable and totally

transparent which makes our guarantees unequivocal!

In the current climate of uncertain trading and a fear of what the new 'normal' will look like when we come out of lock down, the one certainty is that social is king. At Spider we have not had budget reductions on social, quite the contrary, many have invested further. With everyone online brands recognize they need to be showing their credentials through their actions, values and community.

There is no doubt in our mind that the landscape for PR, digital and social will have changed forever as a consequence of this time in our lives. This is not something to be fearful of, quite the reverse, it is an exciting and challenging prospect.

Do come and visit us next time you are in London.

- Sara Pearson, CEO, Spider

If you are looking for communications support or local market knowledge and insight from seasoned communications professionals in London, let us connect you with Sara and Spider.

*And if you need local expertise in any other key markets around the world, let us introduce you to one (or more) of our 50 **PRGN partners** spanning Asia, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Australia and the Middle East.*



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