

REPUTATION RENEGADES

A CHANGE MANIFESTO FOR
CORPORATE AFFAIRS MANAGERS



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“Does your corporate reputation have new owners?”
A frightening question for a corporate affairs manager.
But do you know? This ebook helps you find out.
It’s targeted at those charged with managing
corporate reputation.

*It’s written by a corporate
affairs manager. Me:
David Park. Read my
resume on page 24.*

This ebook is about answering this question but it’s also about clarifying the reason for the question.

It pivots on the massive changes in societal communications in recent years caused by the internet and the World Wide Web. These changes are a COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION; the modern equivalent to the printing press or mass media. They fascinate me. And, like many in PR, I’m getting a professional buzz seeing the term ‘communications-driven change’ popping up everywhere in response.

Well almost everywhere. Corporate communications could be - should be - leading society’s response. They lead in so many other areas but here? Well ... they seem stuck at the starting block.

Big business and corporations are so influential in our society; why are they dragging the chain here?

What’s going on? How are these changes impacting these big guys and their corporate reputations? What is corporate affairs doing? What can it do?

We come back to the frightening opening question above. The cold hard truth is that many corporations have watched ownership of their reputations slip off the radar. While most of the traditional owners are still visible there are many new ownership groups emerging - out of sight and influentially - on the web.

So - perhaps impudently - this ebook provocatively questions the world's biggest and most influential businesses.

It does this manifesto-style. It challenges corporate affairs to be agents-for-change in a time of communications change. It acknowledges corporate inertia: planting seeds rather than starting forest fires. It calls on corporate affairs to be agents provocateur for their profession: helping it do what it does best - improve reputation.

It recruits renegades.

I hope it empowers and emboldens.

It does this in three sections.

READY! Setting the scene and the challenging questions.

AIM! Targeting four key features of the COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION relevant to corporate affairs.

FIRE! A call to arms via 10 RENEGADE TACTICS for corporate affairs managers: to action this manifesto.





READY!

THE “C” WORD

Think about the word ‘corporation’. What reputation comes to mind? Probably not many warm and friendly words I’d bet.

Why is that? Is ‘corporation’ the new C word? (Ok .. maybe not so new.) How did it get that way?

It got that way because corporations - from the start - have been structured to be inward focused, defensive and controlling: ‘Fort Business’ as The Cluetrain Manifesto calls them (p. 119). It also describes them as “legal fictions” (p. 102) reacting increasingly from inside this Fort.

For hundreds of years our society has accepted this. Maybe not happily: but hey .. that’s big business; the big end of town. Corporate meant big and big meant .. well .. another C word. But that acceptance is being seriously challenged. Fort Business is under siege.

“Fort Business .. makes an enormous investment in maintaining the integrity of the walls.” Cluetrain. (p. 155)



Corporate & Cloistered

As the mouthpiece and reputation watchdog, corporate affairs has become the very essence of corporate culture.

Years of distilling key messages, crafting and then defending the corporate line - as an extension of the C-Suite and Board and legal - are insidious. This long immersion, indoctrination and inculcation can blinker corporate affairs. Blinding them even, to new developments in how communities communicate. These vital shifts are in the corporate PR blind-spot simply because they are regarded - currently - as having little relevance to how corporate messages are transmitted.

It can be a challenge to think outside long-held, bunkered responses: even if there was time. And there never is: corporate affairs is always putting out fires. Crises. Issues. Deadlines.

And it can be a challenge to challenge these responses. There is an expectation that corporate affairs will toe the corporate line. After all: they wrote it! So it is that corporate affairs - I hate to say it - is often more conservative and reactionary than the finance department or legal section.

Sorry. For you.

All this is not helped by the fact that professionally, corporate affairs suffers a lingering inferiority complex. Compared with finance, legal, sales, production and marketing - even HR - we are newbies. Not quite seen as the serious heart of the business .. well, just yet. For too many corporations the PR function remains second tier: perfunctory. Our influence on business strategy at any serious level is still on the growth curve.

Not an apology - that's just the way it is.

Corporate affairs has a tough job. They are defending unnatural entities, legal fictions; it's hard to do that naturally. In that role you end up, unnaturally, using corporate-speak, twisting logic to fit the Board's position, putting on suit and tie, speaking in key messages. And worse.

But we - corporate affairs - have an opportunity.

The COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION presents it.

The groundswell of communications-driven change has rocked marketing departments and their advertising agencies.

As they come to grips with the dynamics of a networked economy, a real void - no more than that: a vacuum - has emerged in corporate communications.

Corporate reputation is more exposed and less prepared to respond than ever.

As professional communicators - trained in relating to a breadth of publics - our insights to the broader implications of this change go deeper and further than any marketing exec or advertising suit.

Your point of view - your counsel - right now is priceless!

And it's needed. So: make a difference.

"We need original thinkers, provocateurs, and people who care. passionate change-makers willing to be shunned if it is necessary for them to make a point." Seth Godin. *Linchpin*. (p. 8)

Renegades in Suits

renegade (*ren - e - gade*)

noun: someone who rebels

verb: break with established customs

rebel: dissent, protest, resist - express opposition through action or words



COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION: FOUR FEATURES

1 'FORT BUSINESS' IS UNDER SEIGE

Although it was published in 1999, The Cluetrain Manifesto remains compulsory reading for any communicator interested in change caused by the web.

Despite the passing decade, it remains highly relevant to corporate affairs because of its focus on big business. Of the 95 theses in The Cluetrain Manifesto, all but 10 or so have a direct reference to companies and corporations.

Cluetrain accurately foretold massive changes in how society communicates generally and with corporations specifically. "A powerful global conversation has begun," because of these changes, it says in the opening par. "As a direct result, markets are getting smarter - and getting smarter faster than most companies."

"Most companies fear these changes, seeing them as a devastating loss of control." Cluetrain (p. xxxii)

Where Cluetrain laid the tracks, other insightful commentators followed. [Too many for lengthy quoting in an ebook. See the appendix 'Revolutionary Reading' for a guide to further reading.] They too highlight the challenges facing corporations: not just externally in the market but internally with employees.

For example, Jeff Jarvis on the first page of What Would Google Do (WWGD) highlights new rules for a new age; central among them is: "The mass market is dead, replaced by a mass of niches." (p. 3)

Through these texts corporate affairs and PR cop some shrapnel as part of this siege too. Cluetrain gives PR a good thumping (p. 88) while social media expert David Meerman Scott in World Wide Rave recommends ignoring the old rules of PR (p. 13). I could almost not read the first of his 6 new ideas: "Don't obsess about being 'on message.'" And the galling chapter title - 'PR and lawyers: Hopeless' - in Jeff Jarvis' WWGD (p. 222) is wounding enough without lumping us in with lawyers!

QUESTION : while this siege is raging - what can corporate affairs do?

Missing in Action: Trust has left the building!

Trust in corporations and their CEOs and even in long-established brands has sunk to an all time low.

Why? Corporations continually choose to stay behind the walls of their forts: not communicating as fully as they should or could.

Trust does not grow where there is uncertainty in the relationship. It's fragile.

Global PR firm Edelman conducts an annual study that takes the pulse of consumers' views of government and big business. It's called the Trust Barometer. Results for 2010 continue a worrying trend for corporations.

The Executive Summary notes (p. 4): "Although trust in business is up, the rise is tenuous. Globally, nearly 70 percent of informed publics expect business and financial companies will revert to "business as usual" after the recession." It also notes: "Media continues its three-year decline, now ranking lowest among four institutions studied." (p. 3)

"Fragility" is often used to describe the status of trust in this report.

The Australian results for the 2009 Edelman Trust Barometer are a concerning backdrop. Here are just a few key findings :-

- CEOs are the least trusted source of information when forming an opinion of a company. Eighty-one per cent of respondents do not trust the CEO as a source in Australia, the US and Europe.
- Banks, media companies and insurance companies are the least trusted in Australia.
- Eighty-seven per cent of Australians would refuse to buy from a company they do not trust, and 93% said they chose to buy product or services from companies they trust.

Clearly these insights strike right to the heart of corporate reputation.

QUESTION: How can corporate affairs respond in matters of 'trust'?

Mass Conspiracy: more than anecdotal

My Conspiracy Theory Radar pinged more loudly than ever. It was set off by David Meerman Scott at a workshop by him staged in 2009 in Melbourne. The era of mass media (1930s on) was an aberration: a distortion. He said.

Really? Mass media: that big focus of my working career for so long? Aberration from what: and to what? Surely big business and big media would have been forthcoming about it?

Cynicism aside, Fort Business finds it difficult to come to grips with any shift away from 'mass'. Big business has grown to love its first name after all.

The shift goes like this: society is being allowed to return from a 'mass' state to a more natural form via the web. "Mass" was aberrant - a patch - because it did not gel with basic human preferences in communication. We love 'up close and personal.' We originally shared stories face-to-face in the cave, around the campfire or in the marketplace. We could see, hear, touch and smell each other.

We like it that way: we're humans after all. But the big 'shuns' - urbanisation industrialisation suburbanisation - put an end to this. And mass media and mass markets moved in to fill the void. Since then, counter trends (like the 'f' word: fragmentation) have worked against this domination by 'mass'.

Jeff Jarvis describes it: "The shift from mass is really a shift of power from top to bottom, centre to edge, them to us. " And while I believe the next paragraph following in Jeff's book is over-the-top - "The mass market is dead. It committed suicide. Google just handed it the gun." - it does underscore this shift. Secretly, I suspect, the golden triangle of big corporations, big media and big advertising would just love to return to these good ol' days. It was simpler then. I think they are waiting for the web to behave... just like TV.

But it's too late. Or is it? Never underestimate the conjoined power that was (and still is) the mass market, its mass media and the massive advertising industry that fronts it.

As they say .. stay tuned.

While the mass market and mass media are far from dead, there just maybe a whiff of gangrene downwind.

QUESTION: How will corporations be impacted by this shift - any shift! - from mass? What can corporate affairs do?

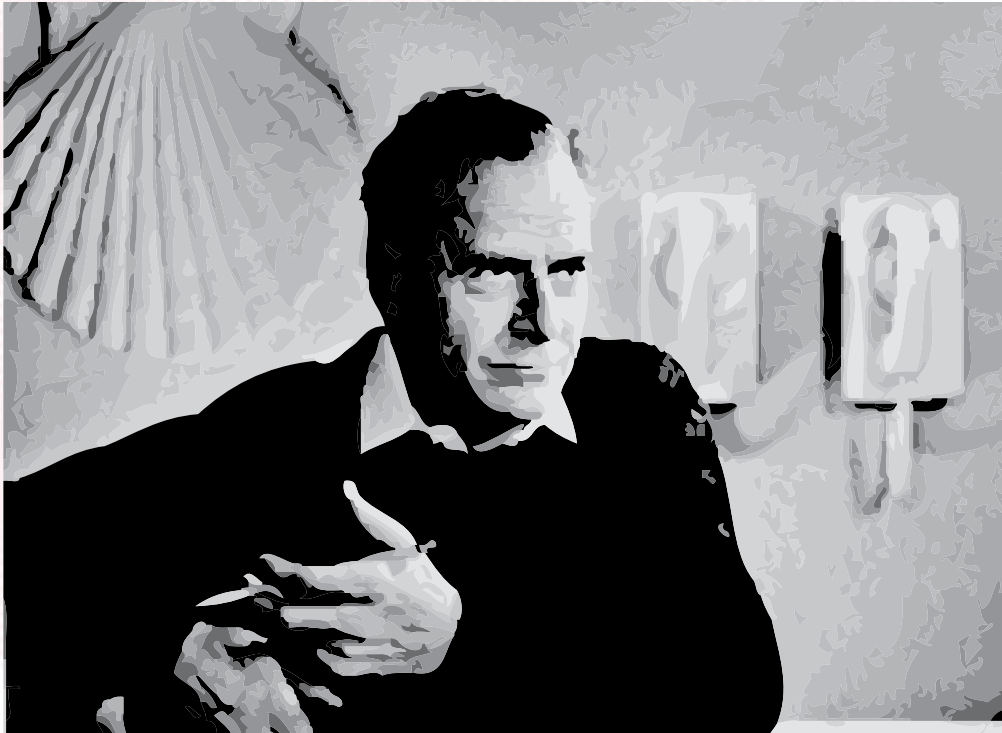


image source: <http://passurlalune.net/2007/10/22/a-bite-of-mcluhan/>

THEN

Marshall McLuhan 1967. *The Medium is the Massage*. pp 68-69.

"Print technology created the public. Electric technology created the mass. The public consists of separate individuals walking around with separate, fixed points of view. The new technology [i.e. 'the mass' - my emphasis] demands that we abandon the luxury of this posture, this fragmentary outlook."



image source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/scobleizer/2216427824/>

NOW

Jeff Jarvis 2009. *What Would Google Do?* p.64 - H2

"The mass market was a short-lived phenomenon. It began with large-scale adoption of television in the mid-1950s - and the consequent death of second and third newspapers in most American cities, yielding one-size-fits-all mass products in both broadcast and print."

2 THE VOICE OF REBELLION

There was no conspiracy. The internet, or rather the online communities sharing the new conversation which it created, had no agenda to be anti-corporation and certainly not anti-business.

What happened was the internet revitalised and amplified conversation across communities just craving to connect. And in so doing it created millions of new communities or tribes that wanted - very simply - to just talk. To converse about things that interested them.

And they do this in a natural conversational tone and style; the sort you'd use face-to-face with friends and family. It is, in so many ways, different to corporate/management speak which Don Watson describes as having triumphed by: "transforming clear, everyday communication into meaningless sludge." It's hard to defend such a taunt except to underline that corporate PR labours to bring one voice to all stakeholders and tick lots of legal boxes on the way.

The tone of voice comparison is chalk and cheese! One is open, simple, familiar, friendly, inclusive and authentic. The other is guarded, complex, remote, unapproachable, exclusive and contrived.

"We don't have any magic bullet for Corporate Linguistic Deficit Disorder." Cluetrain. (p. 182)

But the real difference comes down to trust: that fragile thing.

Online communities learn, through experience, to trust each other; as a counterbalance they've also learned to distrust what corporations said.

The 'voice of rebellion' that corporations hear rising from 'the market' has disturbed and confused them. Mainly because it is so different; it's fragmented and clustered into weird, new communities and micro-movements. This voice is personal, raw, natural: often passionate. It's not filtered and neatly bundled via market research. Nor is it controlled, channelled and re-packed via the gatekeepers in mass media.

Tone of voice is vital because we humans can tell so much from it. Like body language, facial expressions and other 'up close and personal' stuff - you know: like listening - it's essential to how we communicate: and has been since our genus started.

So it's not surprising that if your tone of voice is crap, so then is your reputation. As the Edelman surveys suggest, increasing corporate communications have failed to build trust in corporations.

QUESTION: What can corporate affairs do about trust?

3 PARTISANS

Any revolution worth a cigar has partisans. They make it happen. They give voice to the rebellion. The message for corporate affairs is: understand partisans and what drives them.

Seth Godin's Tribes are made up of partisans (p. 15). He says they want to make a difference. Partisans want something to happen (and something else not to happen.) They create and ignite a micromovement which then gets propelled by the people who choose to follow it.

The web makes it a lot easier to do this; it's encouraging the shift from spectator to partisan. It's never been easier: an idle moment and an iPhone. These partisans only need a computer - or iPhone - and a group of like-minded contacts to become activists. Reputation can be boosted or busted - sometimes in hours - by a tribe of partisans which comes together via the net.

Corporate affairs' radar is mainly tuned to bad news: more alert to busting than boosting. Sad, but not surprising.

You don't have to be too imaginative to 'scenario' your corporate version of the surprise Domino's Pizza got when its employees did dirty stuff with food on YouTube.

What do you do? Your marketing team will suggest something helpful like taking a full-page ad or giving the editor a blast.

And this is where it's getting exciting for corporate affairs: where we can make a real difference.

Speed (with news cycles now measured in tweets) and authenticity are where we start. But more on that below in the FIRE section.

"Brand fans have a new power online. And companies need to consider how to embrace them and relate to them not as big legal entities, but as human beings. Otherwise, they risk an uncontrollable backlash."

John Bell.

There is a PR truism I often use that goes something like: an ounce of ill-will internally will undo a pound of good-will externally.

I quote this because, while the partisans outside the Fort attract lots of interest from corporate affairs, it's the partisans inside (and probably unnoticed) who can really impact reputation.

"We're also the workers who make your companies go. We want to talk to customers directly in our voices, not in platitudes written into a script." Thesis # 65. Cluetrain.

Does management see your in-house activists as friends or foes? What do you in corporate affairs think?

Attitude is everything. And who likes a brush off? But unfortunately corporate affairs is good at brush offs. Because most corporations work by command and control.

Corporate affairs typically owns and controls the company line and access to media. The prevailing logic here is 'consistency of message'. I've used it so many times I've lost count. And corporate affairs is usually defensive and territorial about this.

But, if you hold that reasoning up to the light, you can see the real driver: it's fear. Corporate fear: which is, at heart, about loss of power.

But to give it a better handle let's call it 'litigious fear.' Fear that employees will damage the corporation if they talk outside the command and control cage.

It is not unusual for corporations to heavily penalise or sack employees who speak to media or worse - financial analysts.

So why is a shoe store relevant?



ZAPPOS TO THE RESCUE?

Zappos - an online shoe store in the US - is often touted as best-in-show when it comes to a “corporate” culture that encourages its workers to enter the conversation. Amazon didn’t shell out a billion dollars for Zappos because they have a funky name!

Zappos employees are encouraged to be partisans. The company has jumped into the conversation and taken everyone with it. Check out this review of Zappos social media use <http://www.ignitesocialmedia.com/zappos-social-media-example/> They effectively use most of the major social media platforms. Employees are encouraged to communicate regularly, openly and frankly with customers - almost all use Twitter for example.

Okay. Not every corporation can be a Zappos; there are only a handful of companies like it. And it’s a sad indictment that it is quoted so often. But - wow - what an insight to how exciting communications can be when command and control lets go of the communications reins.

The lesson here is not about copying the social media efforts of Zappos: a major corporation faces a very different set of pressures to this online retailer. The lesson is for the big guy to learn from the little guy. Stay alert to what might help your corporate affairs efforts - what might fit.

Regardless of command and control these online partisans - both internal and external - are influencing corporate reputations more and more.

Individually and in their various new online communities and tribes, these partisans are redefining word-of-mouth: or world-of-mouth as it’s now cutely called.

These Web 2.0 tribes are the new epicentre of corporate reputation influence. But many corporate execs choose not to see it. They stay focused on hard-copy and market research. Tangible stuff they know.

Command and control, mounts a lonely watch on the Fortress wall.



QUESTION: What can corporate affairs do?

4 MAD MEN

Don Draper is alive and well. Keep an eye out.

Challenging the way corporations work is not easy. Some old habits can - and do - get in the way.

I was reminded of this while watching the recent hit TV series Mad Men. It's addictive. It's centred on Madison Avenue in the heydays of advertising in the early 60s. The shock of the program for many was the change - or the lack of it - in social values since then. Discussions about the series has focused on sexism in the office and its patriarchal structure; the morals; and the blatant philandering and infidelity.

The social value that interested me most was the sense of entitlement. The entitlement the men had over women and bosses had over staff.

I'm not sure much has changed to be honest. But the message is: Reputation Renegades will rub against entitlement on a number of fronts. It's good to know its pitfalls.

Entitlement 101

First at big picture level: the entitlement that corporations assert and display in not listening and ignoring. We've covered this above but it's important to understand how pervasive and ingrained it is. It's a major part of corporate culture.

It stems from corporations continually defending their legal walls. The attitude from the top down is: we do it to others - they don't do it to us. We instruct: we don't engage. There is risk in engagement - called exposure - and corporations don't like that at all.

Second and more personal: the entitlement which those in the C-Suite - career executives - claim to status and position. They have burned too many years in the game (like Don Draper) getting the title and the corner office to jeopardise it by "joining some chatroom for kids." Especially for some enthusiast down in corporate affairs.

If you want to see corporate power in action: try rocking that boat.

And speaking of Mad Men and entitlement: advertising execs do not take kindly to corporate affairs getting too heavily involved in "fixing" reputation. By all means issue some media releases: but for serious stuff - leave it to the ad agency. Got that?

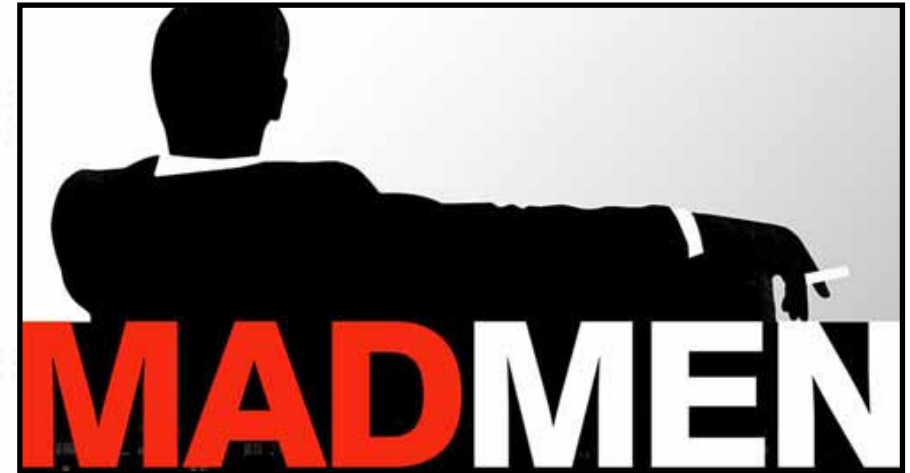
Corporate leaders will not easily renounce their entitlement to control and command: especially in communications. "Not on my watch!"

Leaving the Fort - getting those cultured to entitlement to seriously think how the company can build trust by communicating better: well that's the challenge.

Ooh and ain't it a big one?

It really is like fighting 'the system' or City Hall. And that's why - really - the corporate world needs Reputation Renegades.

QUESTION: Who better than corporate affairs?





TEN TACTICS FOR THE REPUTATION RENEGADE

Here is a manifesto for corporate affairs to help Reputation Renegades in the cause of better communications. The manifesto uses the **10 letters of the word 'reputation' as a mnemonic**. Contrived, I know: but it works.



Reframe & Rethink Reputation

Does your corporation have new owners? As corporate reputation is more influenced by online communities, it's timely to reframe and rethink how corporate reputation is defined given this influence; who really drives it; how it impacts; and then how it's managed. Get a big fresh sheet of butchers' paper or a clean white board: or brainstorm via <http://bubbl.us/>. This requires a fresh look at the new geography of your corporate reputation.

You know the communities that are important. Now chart all the communities that are influencing your corporate reputation. You won't know many of them. So seek out communities and sub-groups that corporate affairs and the C-suite may not see but nonetheless have influence on the web; and you will need to recruit widely in the task of defining these communities.

How have you categorised and prioritised them in the past? What is their influence? Is it changing? How have you defined key influencers or key opinion leaders to this point? Is it the same contact list of A-listers you've used previously? Has your market research and surveying changed to reflect new media consumption? How have you been responding to comment and content on the net?

Review and rethink how your reputation efforts are pre-packaged. How much effort and focus is on restructuring your story for gatekeepers in the media and elsewhere? Give more thought to simplifying the company's story for those who want it first hand. So: what language would you use? Be an authentic, transparent and humane partner in a conversation with your fans and partisans. With this in mind, create compelling content on your website. "If you build it. They will come." Remember there are even fans out there for concrete. Give something.

Reputation Renegades should look first to harmonise their communications with the style and tone of the conversation they seek.



Exemplify & Explain

Lead and steer discussion internally: "How is communications and business being impacted by the web? What are others doing?" Provide examples and explain why they are important.

Have a portfolio-to-go of great case studies of corporate communications responses to the web. Circulate these in various ways (like delicious.com): even as attachments to each project.

Finish every presentation you can with insights to the latest thinking on corporate reputation and the web. The Barack Obama social media example is a good start. Look for examples that will gel with your workplace.

Be seen to be questioning and looking beyond the walls of your business. Exemplify and explain that “we can do this better.”



Profess & Proclaim

Profess. That’s what professionals do. The COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION is not all about the corporation you currently work for. Leave some room to proclaim your professionalism. Are you developing the profession of communications? Or are you better known as the company mouthpiece? This concerns your reputation too.

Every profession goes through times of change. Ours is changing as a hyper-networked market and hyper-transparent communications develops. Business and society adjusts. Write a white paper or an ebook. Circulate it to see what colleagues think. Importantly: be seen to be thinking about this.

And you don’t have to do it alone.

If your professional association is uninspiring - go around it. Use a technology like ning to create a community around particular issues and interests.



Uncover & Unlearn

Internally

Uncover in your corporation the passionate online partisans and fans. They have views on the company and have been circulating them via the net for a while: unofficially of course. They may be geeks in IT but don’t be surprised if its the receptionist. Unlearn stereotypes. Share the thinking via informal workshops/discussions groups and brainstorming and on the intranet.

Open your door and be seen to be open yourself. Get a conversation going. Find out what’s going on in-house. What new thinking is there? Open up existing definitions of the company’s stakeholder groups and key opinion leaders to inhouse review. Share the thinking on the intranet.

Externally

Uncover what’s happening in marketing? What’s their position on how corporate reputation is being impacted by online conversations? Unlearn stereotypes: they think you just do media releases; and you think they just do ad campaigns. Set up a working group. Have a discussion about fans.



Trust

Warm and fuzzy yes: but vital. 'Trust' has fallen from the PR and corporate affairs lexicon. Bring it back. Get it front of mind. Learn more about it. Sounds too simple: too vague.

But get to know more about trust and you get to know more about 'why' corporate communications and corporate reputation has become so detached. Trust is at the heart of any successful brand and reputation. In your Reputation Renegade efforts, please frequently ask: "How do we build trust here?" You'll be surprised at the answers you get.



Allies

Reputation Renegades can't do it on their own. Like any revolution you'll need allies and cadres to help the cause either overtly or covertly. You need the support of key opinion leaders. First - and as a blinding flash of the bleedin' obvious - this means targeting your bosses. Change that is not endorsed by them is almost impossible to bring about. But this is the greatest challenge for the Reputation Renegade. A challenge that will, most likely, boil down to leveraging every inch of flexibility and interest you can magic out of the C-suite. Armed with the other 9 tactics, and bolstered by corporate affairs renown ability to influence, internal allies will help the company join the conversation.



Tell Tales

Everyone loves stories. Cluetrain details 'Seven Ways to Tell Stories' (p. 152). Read that section, then find a part of your corporation where you can unleash the virus of telling stories. Perhaps it's war stories in the sales team or a geeky update in finance. It will build its own momentum if you let it. Funny thing too - you'll note how much people love reading stories they 'own' rather than highly polished ones from corporate affairs. Not surprising really: they know we wrote the Mission Statement.



Invest Inquire Involve

The culture of social media and the ethos of the web are very uncorporate. Invest time in inquiring and understanding the web: even how it came about. Get involved and hands-on with social media; it will build understanding faster than reading. And take note that for many people social media has become the greatest investment they've made in meeting people face-to-face offline - as Tweetups show.



Opportunity Ownership

There is a window of opportunity. It's open now. Corporations and other organisations that are making an effort to engage and embrace communications-driven change are currently enjoying a period of grace. Lots of this stuff is still new. Social media is forgiving and helpful - well most of the time. But that won't last.

The expectation that your corporation should be actively joining the conversation ratchets month on month. Downstream, corporations that have not bothered will not be forgiven or helped; they will just be ignored.

Stress less about ownership of the stuff you write and over polishing it. Send it out unvarnished. Call it a beta version. Share it around for review; get a conversation going. Set a trend.



Numbers

The average age of a social media user is 37. Increasing numbers of women over 50 are using MySpace. And if Facebook was a country it would now be the world's fourth largest with over 480 million users. Apple's iTunes store just celebrated the delivery of its 10 billionth song.

Keep numbers like this at your fingertips. Accountants love them. Indeed they clearly impressed The Economist magazine. It included a 14 page special report on social marketing in its 30 January 2010 edition. This was a positive milestone for social media.

And finally, at some time your Renegade activity may be interrupted to justify the ROI numbers for investing in "social media and web stuff."

Ask the enquirer back to produce the ROI for the latest advertising campaign or better still, get him or her to listen to social media expert David Meerman Scott's rant on his web page.

The web and social media have some impressive numbers. Use them. And - take a breath, look them straight in the eye - and say: "There's a COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION happening and we're being left behind let me tell you about it."

Good luck!

Let me know what you think please. I'd love further input from corporate affairs managers.

You can leave a comment or a question [here](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Park (a.k.a Parky) is a communications strategist.



Last year he and well-known 'PR Warrior' Trevor Young established a new communications consultancy parkyoung in their home town of Melbourne Australia.

David has over 20 years experience in corporate affairs in both in-house and consultancy roles. Atypically, David entered PR via an urban planning background which gave him strengths in strategy development, public policy and social marketing. After commencing his career in government planning roles - he 'went corporate'.

But not into urban planning: nowhere near. He went into beer.

He was appointed as the first Public Affairs Manager for Castlemaine Perkins Brewery (XXXX) in Queensland. One of David's first tasks was to implement for Bond Corporation the notorious and disastrous corporate repositioning of its 3 major state-based breweries to Bond Brewing. This 'baptism of fire' taught him much about corporate reputation.

After the sale of Bond Corp's breweries to Lion Nathan, David was appointed Director of Media Relations based in Melbourne. He was with Bond/Lion Nathan for 11 years. In Victoria, David has since spent two separate periods working for public relations consultancies working with major corporate clients.

From 2000 to 2005 David crossed the beer divide and worked in corporate affairs in Foster's Australia. Here he oversaw major corporate communications projects including the integration of Southcorp and the closure of Kent Brewery in Sydney. He created and launched the Group's 'Enjoy Responsibly' CSR program.

David's approach is based on post-graduate qualifications in planning and early professional experience in market research. When he is not working he enjoys family, jazz and his Mini Cooper.

ABOUT PARKYOUNG

parkyoung is an Australian consulting group specialising in strategic business communications. We are professional PRs still in awe of the unfolding communications revolution caused by the networked market. We offer an eclectic amalgam of strategic and creative thinking; and strong practical knowledge of proven PR techniques backed by fresh thought leadership in the new media landscape.

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Thank you.