

DAVID A. PORTER

mm2pcommunications@gmail.com • 347-324-7557

Skype ID porter1306 • @porter1306

GHOSTWRITING

Bylined Articles

January 2021

Rubenstein PR

Professional Dedication

For Richard Rubenstein

So many outside influences are affecting you're job right now. Whether you're working from home or in an office, the nature of how we conduct ourselves, wearing a mask, social distancing, how we interrelate with our colleagues, is all in a new place. It's a balancing act of all these other considerations, particularly when working from home, that add to the complexity of this window, and things that took a certain amount of time previously take more time now.

It's often hard, given the challenges the pandemic has unleashed, to feel productive, excited...dedicated. Some of the simplest things, like having a cup of coffee with a fellow team member and brainstorming ideas for a project, are now impossible (except over Zoom). With all of the hurdles and restrictions we're facing, you might often feel as if you're spinning your wheels, as if you're in retrograde motion. What can you do to move forward, whether at home or in the office?

A Mantra of Focus

First, establish, and stick to, a mantra of focus. When working on tasks, allocate sufficient time to be productive and complete those tasks. Zoom calls can easily deplete a schedule when we might have to get other things accomplished, so try to schedule them around projects and deadlines. It's most effective to schedule beginning *and* end times for calls – don't leave them open-ended. Interacting with people when you hit a wall is a great solution, but sometimes you need to isolate yourself in the short-term to complete some of your projects.

Keep a calendar of what you need to get done, and by when, and stick to it, so you don't miss any deadlines. It's best to combine a paper calendar with your Google or Outlook calendar, for regular reminders. Have in mind what you want to accomplish each day and week and align short-term goals with long-term goals. Write it all down, establish your personal KPIs and assess each week if you're achieving them.

New Processes

Determine what you should and shouldn't focus on. Using a revisionist mindset, now is a great time to redefine those areas and "freshen up" your goals and objectives. Quality time to think

things through is necessary. Plan individual meetings with yourself. Execute these self-meetings and determine what you really want to do from sessions of planning and reflection.

Trim extraneous items from your to-do list by prioritizing and ranking every item on the list in terms of importance, then figure out how you work most efficiently. Are you better off ticking smaller items off your to-do list, then tackling bigger projects, or are you better off diving into bigger items and clearing the decks of smaller-scale work once the larger stuff is completed? Keep a notebook or journal alongside your to-do list, to jot down ideas. Some of these ideas may make their way to your list, while some may help color and complete the items you've already listed. Consider this your springboard, not an anchor.

Turbulent Times

The election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, Democratic control of Congress and unprecedented issues at the Capitol are making many people nervous about what they do and how they do it. Political changes, both small-scale and sweeping, typically create uncertainty, both in the marketplace and in our lives. The best response is to hold to your mantra of focus and stay productive. It was Plato who described excellence as a skill that takes practice, rather than a gift. The best way to respond to the current turbulence and uncertainty is to continue this practice. Find a way to prevail. It will quell your anxiety.

A Shoulder to the Wheel

In these unprecedented times, we're all looking for ways to thrive, rather than just survive. We're obviously at home more than ever, spending more time with family, often separated from friends. Many of us are looking for a rudder, for direction, for dependability and stability. You might surprise yourself by finding it in your dedication to your work and to your career.

Robert Frost once wrote, "the best way around a problem is through it." By putting your shoulder to the wheel, or your nose to the grindstone, and maintaining your dedication to your work and career, you might feel more grounded, connected to yourself, purposeful. It's been hard not to feel adrift these days. Finding a renewed professional dedication might help you steer straight and power forward.

January 2021

Rubenstein PR

Scott Hirsch: The Fine Art of Reinvention

It's 2021 and we're within a few months of the one-year anniversary of the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic here in the USA. Not the happiest of anniversaries, certainly, but an interesting one nonetheless. Looking back over 2020, I think everyone can agree it was an incredible test of our agility, our adaptability and our endurance. We've had to think on our feet, make drastic changes, find our way on a map that's evolving from moment to moment...we've been constantly reinventing our businesses and ourselves, reinventing our strategies and our approaches.

Welcome to ["The Great Reinvention."](#) The term was coined by [Rishad Tobaccowala](#), a long-time Publicis senior strategist, widely-followed futurist and author of *Restoring The Soul of Business: Staying Human in the Age of Data*: "This is the first time in history when the entire world essentially stopped at the same time," Tobaccowala says. "Unlike other crises such as The Great Depression or 9/11, this is a global, simultaneous political, financial, and humanitarian crisis...it's the equivalent of an asteroid hitting the earth... this will move all of us to rethink everything, which is why I call it the Great Reinvention."

An asteroid hitting the earth! Yes, it feels like a sci-fi film, but more often, for most of us, it feels like cooking pancakes for the kids with one hand while checking work emails with the other. At a very basic level, we've had to reinvent how we manage time and space; the former feels as if it's lengthened, while the latter feels as if it's shrunk. Many of us used to work down the hall from the office kitchen – [now we're working in our actual kitchens](#). The boundaries between our careers and our personal lives have dissolved, and we're now managing both all day, every day, simultaneously. If nothing else, we're learning how to be nimble and organized. What choice do we have?

For entrepreneurs, this is actually a thrilling time. As I put it late last summer, [this is a chance to "build the new."](#) Thanks to shelter-at-home orders and, for much of last year, shuttered restaurants and shops, it felt like the entire world moved online. This presented a great opportunity for revamping digital marketing strategies, ramping up social media outreach and finding new ways to reach new audiences. Entrepreneurs love challenges, and the Covid-19 pandemic has us a chance to meet myriad challenges and rise to them.

2020 is behind us, finally, but 2021 won't look much different, at least for its first half or three quarters. Whatever reinvention you've undertaken, keep at it; if it doesn't work, try something else. This is the core truth of reinvention – it's an ongoing process. Just ask Heraclitus, one of Ancient Greece's foremost philosophers. It was he who first declared, "change is the only constant." Or ask academic, author and entrepreneur Scott Galloway, who published *Post Corona: From Crisis To Opportunity*, in November 2020. [Galloway believes the survivors, the reinventors, will re-emerge even more robust than they were prior to the pandemic](#); the

companies with the smartest scale, the best data and the most digital will rule the world once Covid-19 is in our collective rearview.

My favorite “great reinvention” story? Surprisingly, it’s not from last year but from last century, from the Eighties! If you’re a Def Leppard fan, you probably know this story. In 1983, after a few albums that failed to trouble the charts, the Sheffield, UK band released [Pyromania](#), which kickstarted the pop metal genre and went on to sell 10 million copies. The band toured the world, conquered it (with the help of classic rock radio and MTV), and began work on their next album. About a month later, on New Year’s Eve 1984, [Rick Allen](#), the band’s 21-year-old drummer, lost his arm in a car accident. Def Leppard circled the wagons while Allen worked on an electronic drum kit, one he could play with his feet, a great reinvention, for sure, and in 1987 the band released *Hysteria*, which sold 12 million copies in the USA alone – to date it’s sold 25 million copies worldwide.

As another British rock star, Winston Churchill, once put it, “never flinch, never weary, never despair.” Let’s rethink everything. Let’s reinvent, and let’s make it great.

How are you reinventing? [I’m at LinkedIn 24/7](#) – let me know.

November 2020
Rubenstein PR
Post-Election Media Relations and PR Strategies
For Richard Rubenstein

I founded Rubenstein PR in 1987, the penultimate year of Ronald Regan's presidency and about a year before George Bush defeated Michael Dukakis to become our 41st president. We represent clients in a variety of industries, including real estate, hospitality, entertainment and technology, but no matter what the marketplace, we always take election cycles into consideration when counseling our clients: we always keep an eye on the horizon; our mission is to lead them down the most fruitful path.

It's anticipated this year's election will see Americans voting in record numbers regardless of how they decide to vote – the options this year are by mail and at election day polling places and, on account of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, by voting in person prior to Election Day. With this many voting options generating so many votes, we may not know the results of the election by 11:00 pm EST, when polls close in California, Oregon and Washington. Uncertainty, always endemic to our presidential election cycles, may linger for a few weeks after election night; coupled with the pandemic, we may, as pilots often announce from the cockpit, experience some turbulence. You might want to anticipate this turbulence and put together an election cycle media relations strategy that helps your clients respond accordingly.

You've been diligently bringing your clients' stories to particular audiences – given the ongoing pandemic, you've probably been retooling your messaging to take the impact of Covid-19 on your clients and their customers into consideration. Now, at the end of the election cycle, you need to determine how a Democratic or Republican win affects your clients' business continuity, particularly with regard to potential policy changes, which may transpire regardless of who's in office come the end of January 2021. Will there be presidential orders or appointees with a direct impact on your clients' operations? You need to anticipate any and all possibilities. It's been our experience that presidential elections don't usually drive the economy up or down either prior to or after the election, as real market volatility is driven by policies, as opposed to personalities.

Okay, so you've got your nautical charts on the table, which means you can now evaluate the pros and cons of media engagement following the election. Is this an opportunity to insert your client into the narrative, to further his or her position as a subject matter expert with an authentic, valuable perspective? Or will doing so create a situation that invites unwanted scrutiny? It's often wise to refrain from political media engagements altogether, especially if a pronounced political opinion will have a negative impact on a client's brand; if your clients feel they must enter the fray, opt for more controlled options such as written Q&A or byline opportunities, rather than live podcasts or television/radio interview – asking for advance approval of quotes is also an option for phone interviews.

Now that you've charted your course, it's time to craft some strategic messaging to safeguard your clients (whether or not they intend to participate in the conversation). For clients who wish to establish themselves as subject matter experts within the context of a trending political topic, you should ready proactive messaging in advance for any coordinated commentary opportunities: this messaging must be consistent with company values and shouldn't at all reflect personal political opinions.

Make sure you line up your social media plan with your media relations plan and updated messaging – again, prior to the election. This might include statements from your clients' leadership teams, providing resources to help consumers understand if the election will have an impact on the brand and what these implications might be. Social media is a great way to make your clients available – some of the best ways to do so are virtual chats on Twitter, Facebook Live or even Zoom presentations. You can help them maintain a fixed position in the midst of a storm of election coverage and opinion.

Finally, be sure your plan is open-ended, since it's difficult to anticipate what's next. You and your clients may need to be equal parts agile and flexible for the next three weeks or months. You'll need to keep an eye on that horizon to steer your clients to it.

October 2020

Rubenstein PR

Scott Hirsch: Prime Day: Amazon Wins Again!

In case you're not one of the 150 million Amazon Prime members worldwide, here's a quick rundown: Prime is Amazon's membership program. For around \$12 per month, Prime members get exclusive deals and discounts: free delivery; a 30-minute headstart on Lightning Deals; special offers at Whole Foods (and 5 percent back when buying groceries with an Amazon Prime Rewards Visa) and Amazon Originals and movies and TV shows at no extra charge. Gamers get free games and a free subscription to [Twitch](#), the world's leading video platform and community for gamers, clothes horses can sign up for Prime Wardrobe and music addicts have access to a library of 2 million songs – ad free. Great deal? Can 150 million Prime members be wrong?

So isn't every day Prime Day if you're a Prime member? Not exactly, and that's the genius of Amazon Prime – not only are there deals every day, but once per year (and for a period thereafter), Amazon offers extra discounts on everything from clothing to phones to, with a nod to the current pandemic, masks and digital thermometers. [Amazon started Prime Day in 2015 as its answer to Singles' Day](#), a shopping holiday popularized by Chinese ecommerce company Alibaba. This year's event was two days, October 13th and 14th, and it seems a great many Prime members, as well as third-party sellers on Amazon and the company itself, now see Prime Day (or days) as the unofficial commencement of the holiday season, like a members-only digital Black Friday.

On October 15th Amazon issued a press release, [“Amazon Prime Day 2020 Marked the Two Biggest Days Ever for Small & Medium Businesses in Amazon’s Stores Worldwide.”](#) The numbers were, to say the least, impressive:

- Independent third-party sellers — most of which are small and medium-sized businesses — surpassed \$3.5 billion in sales on Prime Day, a nearly 60 percent % increase over Prime Day 2019.
- Top-selling categories for third-party sellers: Bedding, Wireless Accessories, Nutrition & Wellness, Arts, Crafts & Sewing and Health Care.
- Prime members saved more than \$1.4 billion on Prime Day 2020.
- Prime members earned tens of millions of dollars in Amazon.com credits from this year’s “Spend \$10, Get \$10” Prime Day promotion while shopping Whole Foods Market, Amazon Fresh, Amazon Go, Amazon Go Grocery, Amazon Books, Amazon Pop Up, and Amazon 4-star stores.
- Echo Dot was the most popular item purchased on Prime Day globally.
- After holding Prime Day in India in August, the October Prime Day was offered in 19 countries, with two new and large markets, Brazil and Turkey, part of this year's event.

So this year's Prime Day was a knockout, even after it was rescheduled from July because of the pandemic, and my feeling is it's going to be an October event going forward. It gives Amazon

the jump on holiday shopping, particularly in an arena where it's competition is...well, everyone, pretty much, but let's say it's going toe to toe with Best Buy, Target and Walmart.

The lesson for smaller ecommerce companies, and their marketing teams, is a simple one. First, if you've got a product, you've got to be an Amazon independent third party-seller, no questions asked; Amazon just gives you a massive global audience, and you can't afford not to get in front of it. Second, membership programs work, plain and simple, particularly those that combine loyalty points, discounts, rebates and exclusives. If you can find a way to create one, do it – not only does it give you direct access to customers, it also expands what you can do on social media: you can drive membership via social media channels while simultaneously reaching out to members. The program will increase the amount of content you have to share, the amount of announcements you can make, online events you can hold, etc. And make sure your membership comes with expedited, discounted delivery.

Amazon keeps getting it right, to the tune of billions. No reason you can't hitch your wagon to their star and sail across the galaxy with them.

Speaking of stargazing, I do most of mine at [LinkedIn](#). Stop by anytime.

July 2020

Rubenstein PR

Scott Hirsch: The Power of Positive Thinking (How to Stay Motivated During Trying Times)

You don't need me to tell you we're going through hard times – all you need to do is look around. The thing is, we all thought we were going to be through this by mid-summer or Labor Day, but here we are. Covid-19 cases are spiking in a number of states, [including California](#), and, as of July 30th, my home state of Florida reported 451,423 confirmed cases, [a one-day increase of 9,446 new cases](#).

What we thought was going to be a speed bump has turned into a roadblock. September, October? Will the kids be back in school, or online again? How many more businesses are going to file for bankruptcy? Rather than resolution and acceleration, which is what we were all hoping for, we're facing uncertainty on a scale heretofore unknown, with no end in sight and a presidential election in four months. We are storm-tossed, to say the least: and the sky above us is glowering, and it doesn't look like anyone will be shouting "land ho!" from the crow's nest anytime soon. What to do?

Stay positive. I know at this point it sounds trite, after months and months of trying to stay positive, but, frankly, what choice do we have? You're not going to fold, quit or pack it in. Author [J.P. Donleavy](#) once said, "...never while you breathe give up." Are you still breathing? Okay, then you know what to do next. I'm not saying it's easy – for many of us, these may be the most trying times we've ever endured, and I'm sure I speak for most of us when I tell you I find myself exhausted a lot of days, fed up...so how can you stay positive? How do you muster the energy to keep putting one foot in front of the other? These days I often recall [the galley scene in Ben-Hur](#), when Quintus Arius tells the galley slaves, "we keep you alive to serve this ship – so row well, and live." Like you, I'm just rowing as well as I can. As hard as I can. Why?

Because this is what the times require of us, to keep going, to stay positive, to stay motivated. Look, I can't promise you when things are going to change, when the future we're all hoping materializes finally *materializes*, but I can tell you it will. It has to. And we have to keep rowing toward it.

This is where the power of positivity, the necessity of motivation, to get through this and to get beyond it. We have to stay positive, stay motivated, stick to our plans and don't deviate. We have to come out swinging, for the fences, every day. If you think about it, is there any other option? It's a rhetorical question, obviously, but I'll answer it for you: no, there isn't.

Stay positive and everything improves. Is the glass half-full right now? Damned straight, but that doesn't mean we can't hoist it as if it's half-full. Negativity saps energy – positivity creates it. And right now, you need whatever positivity you can generate, as do your family, friends, employees...even the guy collecting carts in the parking lot at Target! He needs your positivity. He needs you to smile at him, even with your mask on, to ask him how he's doing, to tell him to stay cool in this crazy heat...your positivity helps keep him motivated. You're giving a stranger, someone in your community, positive energy, a connection, a reason to keep going, to feel like all's not lost. Right now, what could be more important? Again, a rhetorical question, but I'll answer it for you: nothing.

When you're positive, you have something to give. Think about it this way: positivity radiates; negativity enervates. Right now it's about how you can push yourself forward, with enthusiasm and hope and, just by doing so, you can give everyone else in your orbit a push. We can inspire each other. And we need to. Your positive thinking will help you stay motivated, and it will motivate everyone around you – it will

inspire [courage](#) and gratitude, your own and everyone else's. We need all of it to get through this, to the other side of this, wherever and whenever that is. Do I see land on the horizon? Right now, no. But I'm positive it's there and I'm more motivated than ever to get there. Row well, friends, and never while you breathe give up. We have no other choice.

Need some encouragement? [Let's connect on LinkedIn.](#)

Scott Hirsch is an internationally recognized expert in data, analytics and digital marketing. Scott has been published in Fortune, Time, INC, Forbes, Huffington Post, Ten Republic, Entrepreneur, and Fox Business. He has helped pioneer some of the most utilized data technology concepts commonly used today, including opt-in email, E-appending, Digital Data/Media Marketing (SEO, Google Ads, and Social Media Management), affiliate marketing and DIY Application Development.

June 2020
Rubenstein PR
Covid-19 Fatigued? Scott Hirsch Says 'Let's Move On!'

How many times in the past few months have you seen this type of messaging:

I hope this message finds you, your families and colleagues healthy. With associates and family members worldwide, our organization has very directly felt the human toll of this pandemic. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families who have suffered from Covid-19 and with the families of our clients who have experienced similar heartbreak. We will do everything we can to support those in need.

We needed it, for sure. These have been unprecedented times, and the best way we had to relate to our clients, our vendors - to our families and friends - was to address each other with care and concern. With awareness and empathy. It was heartening to see this kind of communication from the largest of entities to individuals, wearing masks over their mouths and noses, passing each other in parks and supermarkets. I was happy to see kind heartedness and personal responsibility these past few months; I, for one, will do my best to see it continue.

That said, I think everyone, businesses and individual consumers, adults and kids, is just exhausted with this entire experience. Summer's here, and everyone wants to move on. More and more businesses are reopening, with a number of states, including [California](#), [Massachusetts](#) and [Washington](#), publishing reopening guidelines. I think, across the USA, the sentiment is the same - let's get ready to roll. And this means it's the perfect time, as we reach June, it's time for marketers to move away from Covid-19 messages of concern and support and back to communicating who we are and what we do.

We're starting to see this across the board. Take retail, for example. One of the USA's largest surf and apparel shops, Ron Jon, which is based in Cocoa Beach, FL (near Cape Canaveral and the Kennedy Space Center). The shop is gearing up for the summer by returning to the kind of messaging we were all using before the pandemic took hold here in March. [The company's May 25th email to customers](#) is all about women's swimwear:

Whether you are pairing a bikini top with a boardshort, or separate bikini pieces, make your beach or pool style your own by mixing and/or matching.

There's no mention of Covid-19 - it's just a straight-up retail email. And, other than [its locations page](#), which includes information pertinent to store hours and shipping as they've been and

remain affected by the pandemic, as well as information about social distancing at Ron Jon stores, everywhere else the Ron Jon site is back to business.

I think this is a great model for marketers. **The lede is no longer Covid-19, it's products and services**, order fulfillment and customer support, and my advice is to come out swinging. Here's a few simple starting blocks, which I'm sure you'll remember from way back when, like February:

1. Diminish Your Reliance on Covid-19 Messaging

Start revising your messaging away from Covid-19. Yes, leave some information on your website or in your email signature regarding any essential Covid-19 information your customers need, including shipping delays and social distancing requirements at physical locations, but get rid of everything else. You've already offered your support, explained how you're keeping your team safe, etc. You can let it go - everyone's got it.

2. Come Roaring Back

Roll out a special deal, something brand new...now is your best chance to change tack and charge ahead with a new campaign. Free yourself up from your Covid-19 messaging and come out swinging. Your customers will appreciate your enthusiasm and positivity. Keep their Covid-19 fatigue in mind and execute a strategy that feels fresh - and refreshing.

3. A Great Opportunity for a Reintroduction

Just as your current customers will be receptive to your revised messaging, so will new potential customers. While you're getting your digital marketing campaign ready to launch, look to build your list of new leads. Think of whatever you undertake this summer as a brand new start. You've got room to move, to build a broader audience and to fold some educational components into your messaging - you'll have the space, now that you're not discussing the crisis. If you think about it, Covid-19 became part of everyone's brand this spring - think of this summer as your chance to take on a soft rebranding, and start pitching. Surf's up!

[I'm on LinkedIn 24-7](#) - let me know how it goes!

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technology concepts commonly used today, including opt-in email, E-appending, Digital Data/Media Marketing (SEO, Google Ads, and Social Media Management), affiliate marketing and DIY Application Development.

June 2020

For Rubenstein PR

Scott Hirsh: Five Things You'll Need to Do To Reopen

Ready to take your office out of its Covid-19 mothballs? Who isn't! I'm sure, like I am, you're raring to go. We're all hoping the worst of the crisis is behind us, but some of the changes it's brought to our personal and professional lives will be with us for a long while. This means [social distancing, which we've all been doing every day, will continue once we're back at work](#). We're still trying to keep each other safe, but it's a different thing to achieve at work than it is in a supermarket. If you're planning on reopening your office over the next month or so, here are five things you'll have to do to keep your team safe, and happy and productive, once they return.

1. Clustered Workdays

Remote working, telecommuting...whatever you want to call it, no one's coming into the office every day for a long time - maybe never. Even so, you'll need to get people back to the office to some extent, and the best way to do this is to shift your operating model to a project-based model. It's simple: you're putting together a big presentation, and you need your team on site to work together to get it done. Book the team members you need and a skeletal support crew for three or four days, however many it takes to get the project done. Put them up in a nearby hotel and shuttle them to and from the office, which will cut down their commutes and reduce their possible exposure to anyone who might have or be carrying Covid-19. Bring in meals (including dinners - late nights are fine if everyone is working to get done, be safe and get back home to their families). Once the presentation is finished, let your team members return to their homes to do any follow-up, and any maintenance and marketing, they need to do.

2. Staggered Workdays

You probably have departments you need open every day: billing, accounts payable, administration, IT...the ball bearings that keep the wheels turning. These are the jobs it's especially hard to do from home, as they're dependent not only on your operations, but on your infrastructure. To get people in these departments back to work, it's best to stagger their workdays. If you've got more than one person in each or a few of these departments, divide up the number of days amongst department members, so there are fewer people in the office, and let everyone work from home on Fridays. If you're a smaller company with one person in each department, offer each of these employees a clustered workday option and only when your

project teams are working at home. The goal here is, of course, to reduce the number of people in your office at any one time.

3. Child Care

Anyone at your company with children has probably been at home with them, every day, since the third week of March. Schools have moved online, and it looks like most [summer camps will be canceled](#). This means the kids will be home all summer long! If you want to get your team members back to the office, even for a few days a week, they're going to need child care. You don't need to help them procure it, as most parents, even now, can find a decent babysitter, but providing your staff with a child care stipend will go a long way to improving individual and team productivity. Let's face it - even if one of your designers or marketers uses the stipend to send the kids out for a takeout pizza or burgers at Shake Shack with one of their grandparents, you're giving them an hour to focus, to speak to you via video call without interruption, a chance to come up with new ideas...be generous and take the kids out of their hair, somehow, for a few hours a day. You'll be repaid handsomely.

4. Catering

A lot of big tech companies, including Apple and Google, have staff canteens where employees can eat delicious, healthy meals and snacks and fuel up with gourmet coffees and other beverages - for free. Why? It keeps people at work and away from nutritionally-bereft fast food which, in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, these are two things you want to do. Once you bring people back to the office, the less often they leave the building, the less likely they are to risk exposure to the virus; giving them healthy food, like salads and whole wheat pastas and fresh fruit and lean meats, will help them maintain overall health and strengthen their immune systems. If you've got people at your office, give them a reason to hang around, and make it a healthy reason. And, as an added bonus, bringing in food and beverages gives you a chance to support local businesses.

5. Keep It Clean

This is obvious, but make sure to redouble your efforts to keep your office clean - make it sparkle. This will keep everyone safe and healthy, and inspired. The cleanliness of your space will make your staff feel reassured and protected, and most people, even those famed for messy desks, love working in a clean, fresh space. And, again, bringing in more custodial staff gives you a chance to help local businesses. Make sure to put up [handwashing posters](#) in your lavatories and kitchens (order them free from the CDC [here](#)), make sure to put a bottle of hand

sanitizer on every desk, and place boxes of masks and gloves in your common areas: take all of the simple, necessary steps required to keep everyone healthy and safe.

[I'm on LinkedIn 24-7](#) - let me know what else you think might be necessary to get up and running. And good luck to you and your team!

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May 2020

Rubenstein PR

Scott Hirsch: Back to the Future

Have we all had enough? Of course. Do we know when the dust will finally settle on the Covid-19 Crisis? Not yet. In the meantime, if you're an entrepreneur, particularly in digital marketing, you've been bending and twisting like a yogi to adapt to the changes the crisis has effected. It's a wild new topography, isn't it? Step right, and you land new customers and inspire even greater loyalty from your current customers; step wrong and you twist an ankle or a knee.

If you're like me, you've been keeping an eye on the horizon throughout the crisis. No, that horizon isn't fixed, but it's there. Not only do I believe in it, I'm preparing for it. How? It's simple. I'm keeping track of how what's working in digital marketing, right now, so I've got the most potent arsenal of tools imaginable, and ready, once we shift back into a higher gear. [According to Deloitte, the global economy will recover after a V-shaped recession](#). Here are the trends I think digital marketers will need to saddle now and in the coming quarters to get us back to the future.

1. Rising cost-per-click (CPC) and paid media advertising (beyond Facebook and Google)

CPC has been a boon to digital marketers, as your client only pays when someone clicks through the ad. CPC is rising, however, as the number of online searches seems to be reaching a critical mass. It's time to consider sorting your campaigns by intention, which enables you to take stock of different consumer behaviors and objectives. The 800-pound gorillas in the space are of course Facebook and Google, and you can expect CPC on these platforms to increase as searches become more competitive.

Savvy digital marketers have already started bundling other platforms into their packages. If you haven't already, you've got to add Amazon Advertising, Instagram, LinkedIn, Medium, Microsoft Advertising, Pandora, Quora, Reddit, Spotify, Twitter and YouTube in your quiver. And keep expanding! Keep looking for new sites, and more specific sites, given your clients' products and services, where you can maximize your budget. The trick is to spread out and meet your audience where it "lives."

2. Predictive lead scoring

Put AI to work for your clients! There are myriad CRM platforms available, including [Dynamics 365](#), Hubspot and Salesforce, all far more effective than using a manual process derived from traffic source and lifecycles. The crisis has amplified an already hyper-competitive marketplace, and it's going to remain so once we get through it. Predictive lead scoring gives you a model to score leads in your pipeline based on their indications. You can of course use these scores to pursue your most viable leads, which maximizes your efforts – and your clients' budgets.

3. Personalized video

With everyone sheltering at home and logging so much time online, this is the moment to add personalized videos to your portfolio of digital marketing tools. AI video generation outfit Vedia has [a full page of infographics](#) explaining the tremendous impact this sales tool can have. And you can fold these videos into your email marketing campaigns – according to Vedia, the appearance of the word “video” in an email subject line boots open rates by almost 20 percent, while personalized videos achieve an almost five-fold unique click-through increase. Let them see your face and hear your voice. It works. But remember, the higher the quality of your video (and all your content), the better chance you’ll have of quality engagement. [Vidyard](#) is just one of a number of platforms, including [vimeo](#), you can use to create videos for your content marketing. Many of the larger platforms are using personalized videos in their digital marketing campaigns, including Google and LinkedIn. And, once you get your videos done and up, make sure to [create a YouTube channel](#).

4. Assignment selling

Reuse and recycle – and by this I mean content. Don’t let anything go to waste! Whatever educational and informational content your clients have, use it to inform your audience. In my experience, people love information. They love facts – they want to know how a product is made, how a service is provided, what your clients’ products and services can do for them...it’s also a great rule of thumb to respect your customers’ intelligence. This is what content marketing is all about: leverage the content your clients have already created and repurpose it as part of your marketing strategy. What could be more cost-effective than sharing content that’s already been created? It gives your clients, and you, a head start.

What trends do you think are on the rise right now? What do you think is going to be most important this summer and fall as, hopefully, the Covid-19 Crisis begins to wind down? [I’m on LinkedIn 24-7](#) – find me and let me know. I’m looking forward to all of us getting back to the future.

March 2020

Rubenstein PR

Scott Hirsch: CEOs Need to Learn the Language of Collaboration

Call me a serial entrepreneur and I'll take it as a compliment. Since 2000 I've founded three companies – I've been a C-Suite executive at all three and a CMO at a fourth, and these experiences have taught me a lot about communications, both internal and external. But what I want to discuss in this article is about internal communications, and I don't mean newsletters and communiques from your HR department. I'm talking about how you talk to your people, what I call the language of collaboration.

If you're a CEO, the best advice I can give you regarding is this: think about using what I call the language of collaboration whenever you communicate with your team. The language of collaboration isn't just the language we use: what we say also conveys non-verbal messages. We often spend so much time worrying about how to say something, or how to write it down, that we make ourselves oblivious to our non-verbal cues. We also lose sight of how we should be thinking of the result, the product, of all our communications. In other words, you are communicating with your team, your managers and your employees to achieve results. This should give you pause. What are you saying? How are you saying it? What will what you've said ultimately help your team achieve?

How about when you start a sentence with, "I'm not saying this as a criticism, but..." the person to whom you were speaking simply heard you criticizing him or her. And how about this old warhorse: "I'm not saying I have all the answers." Which means you probably think you do! Can you think of the last time you wanted to say something, but you held back: what did it sound like? How was it received? Your audience's reaction will often reveal the intention behind your communication, even if your words have camouflaged some of it.

Be clear about what you want to say and how you want to say it but, please, find a way to be as kind as you are direct. True leadership is always an invitation, not a command. Keep your organizational goals in mind and make sure to communicate your desire to achieve them and your belief they are achievable! The language of collaboration starts with a CEO who always operates with a clear understanding of organizational direction and can communicate this direction clearly and succinctly.

The personal touch is also the best way to kickstart collaboration. Even though everything these days seems to be accomplished via email, Asana, Slack, Trello, etc., even though everyone is staring into a smartphone and communicating via SMS and emoji, there's still no substitute for a face-to-face conversation, a quick coffee, lunch...the best way to inspire collaboration is to make it personal, to be connected. To make people feel valued and included. Creating a positive environment, a collaborative and warm atmosphere, is the best way to get the best out of your people. It may sound like a cliché, but it starts with a conversation. Once that conversation has started, it's your job to keep it going.

Where you're coming from – your commitment, your energy – has more to do with what your audience hears than you might think. When you're impassioned and truly present, people feel it; when you welcome new ideas, people sense it. You can't help anyone shift his or her paradigm unless you shift yours first. Collaboration starts as a mindset, then it becomes language, an ongoing conversation, successful cooperation and achievement.

What you want to achieve is evolution. You want your organization to adapt and evolve, to weather all challenges, take on all comers...the only way to do that is to help you teams evolve, collectively and individually. Look no further than Charles Darwin for guidance here: "It is the long history of humankind – and animal kind, too – that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed." Want to prevail? Start speaking the language of collaboration and see where it can take you.

March 2020

Rubenstein PR

Harley Lippman

CARE-FRONTATION: BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES

If you're hiring, chances are more than 35 percent of your applicants are Millennials. Americans born between 1982 and 2002 now make up more than one-third of the U.S. labor force. This is the largest generation in our labor force, [according to Pew Research](#), which estimates approximately 56 million Millennials were employed or seeking employment as of year-end 2017 (the most recent year for which data is available).

Millennials have been the dominant generation in the labor market since 2016 and, given their penchant for emerging technologies and their firm belief in work-life balance, they are turning our 20th century conception of work inside out and upside down. Stand aside, Boomer – there's a new sheriff in town, and he or she is already done using apps you've never even heard of.

So, these upstarts want to work for you, but these aren't men (and women) in gray flannel suits. What is it Millennials want out of work? [A recent Gallup report boils it down to six things](#):

1. Millennials don't just want a paycheck; they want a purpose. They want work to have meaning. Compensation is important, but Millennials are motivated more by mission and purpose than paycheck.
2. Millennials aren't pursuing job satisfaction; they are pursuing development: they expect opportunities to learn and grow.
3. Millennials don't want annual reviews – they want ongoing conversations and feedback on their current performance.
4. Millennials don't want to fix their weaknesses; they want to develop their strengths.
5. Millennials don't want a job, they want a good job, one in which they contribute to an organization that values their strengths and gives them the chance to do what they do best.
6. Millennials want coaches and mentors, not bosses: they expect their managers to coach their performance and to value them as people and employees.

Number 6 is especially important in bringing out the best in your Millennial employees. You need to build real relationships – command-and-control management doesn't work with this cohort, particularly given their tech savvy. They are coming to your company with expertise, high expectations and a full tank of gasoline and, if they're unhappy, they're willing to pack up and go. The whole “start in the mailroom, end in the boardroom” path so many people took during the postwar era is, like the era itself, a thing of the distant path. These youngsters are on the move, always.

Think about how it feels to be young: you have endless energy and a million ideas. You know everything! The problem is, when you think you know more than you really do, the people around you may perceive this as arrogance. They may think you feel you're superior to them, that you know best, that what they do isn't necessary. Arrogance is a distorted picture of one's own abilities, and it sometimes travels in tandem with real talent and a strong work ethic. Even if your young achievers don't feel this way, they may charge through the front door with an attitude that alienates both coworkers and management.

In business, what's most important is to be effective – this is far more important than being right. being right. So, what's an effective way to deal with your amped-up go-getters? I've devised a simple strategy I call "care-frontation". How does care-frontation work? It starts quite simply: you sit down with an employee who's having problems and share both the positive and negative feedback you've gotten from their coworkers and managers. As you can see in number 3 above, Millennials want regular, direct feedback, as opposed to annual reviews – care-frontation is a great way to satisfy this desire while addressing a problem in the workplace *and* hewing to number 6 above. It demonstrates to your Millennial employees you value them as people and employees.

Start with the positives first – if you don't, you've lost your opportunity. If you begin the conversation dishing out negatives, your employee will (a) go on the defensive and (b) be deaf to anything positive you have to say. Lead with, 'people really like this about you, our team has been really impressed with, we're really excited to have you on board...' before you start listing specific examples of arrogant or insensitive behavior.

Rather than being judgmental and a scold, your best move is to give constructive feedback and offer your employee an opportunity to self-correct within a clear-cut plan for improvement. Keep number 5 from the list above in mind: "Millennials don't want a job, they want a good job, one in which they contribute to an organization that values their strengths and gives them the chance to do what they do best every day." Care-frontation is an excellent way to show your Millennial employees you value their strengths, that you truly want to help them contribute to your organization and enable them to excel.

Sometimes great work comes from somewhat difficult characters – you'll have to decide if the value of the substance exceeds the challenge of the style, if "the juice is worth the squeeze." But remember, there's a difference between difficult and toxic, and most people in a professional setting want to do their best. This speaks directly to number 2 from the list above: "Millennials aren't pursuing job satisfaction, they are pursuing development, and they expect opportunities to learn and grow." If handled right, care-frontation gives them an opportunity to grow personally and professionally. And it gives you an opportunity to be a coach and a leader, to manage expectations, and manage them swiftly and diplomatically.

Maybe, in helping your Millennials along their way, you'll discover opportunities for your own personal and professional growth? The juice might just be worth the squeeze.

February 2020

Rubenstein PR

Emad Georgy

A GREAT CTO EATS PROBLEMS FOR BREAKFAST

Forget the Shredded Wheat and Grape Nuts, the kale, apple and cucumber smoothie...What does a great CTO eat for breakfast. Problems! The willingness to embrace problems, to tackle them and solve them, is the driving force behind what we do every day, and we should start right away, at breakfast, without hesitation or procrastination.

Poet Robert Frost once wrote, “the best way around a problem is through it,” and a great CTO accepts this as a mantra: he or she sees problems as opportunities to excel individually, to lead a team and to help move his or her organization forward. It’s the hunger to understand root causes, and the root causes behind these root causes, that creates truly durable solutions.

Where would we be without problems? Imagine you’ve been playing soccer for almost the entire game. It’s been a grueling match, a series of problems, and you’ve had to sprint up and down the field until your legs ache. One of your midfielders finds you and puts the ball ahead of you, and you’re heading downfield toward two fullbacks and the opposing keeper. As you approach the top of the penalty box when, the ref blows the whistle, stops the game, pulls the opposing goalkeeper and his fullbacks from the field and motions for you to shoot at what is now an empty goal. How would you feel? If you’re honest with yourself, you’d feel defeated. You’d feel you’d been robbed of what you’d earned. That your victory would be hollow. People who love what they do understand problems are endemic to progress – they are how we measure ourselves, how we recalibrate ourselves for further challenges. Without problems to solve, we are static.

Great leaders know taking these bulls by the horns is the best way to inspire and motivate teams. For true leaders, eating problems for breakfast is about taking responsibility. About ownership. About slaying your dragons smack in the middle of the village square to rally your community to victory. This is how you demonstrate to your teams that you are taking responsibility not just for your particular duties, but for the success of your entire organization – you are setting a dynamic, three-dimensional example of making the organization’s goals your personal goals.

Real leaders are problem solvers, not “problem reporters.” They know they are always in the game, on the field, in the water...they refuse to remain on the sidelines or in the stands. They want to be in the center of the action, at the stove, under the hood...they want to be where the action is. they want to be part of that action, and they want to use it to effect real, accretive outcomes. They take charge, rather than criticizing the contribution of others which, ultimately, makes it impossible to take ownership of a team’s successes as well as its failures. This can only damage your credibility and reputation. The remedy here is to devote yourself to taking on problems, to solving problems, to helping your teams solve their problems. Real leadership means rolling up your sleeves and getting to work.

This willingness to “get dirty,” this stick-to-it-ive-ness, is what creates the culture at your organization: the more your individual team members see themselves as problem solvers, the more likely they are to take ownership of these problems. This in turn helps create a collaborative culture of problem-solving. What could be better for achieving mature solutions and growth? Culture is merely the stories you tell every day and, by inspiring individuals to become problem solvers, to take this type of day-to-day ownership, everyone begins to tell the same story. Everyone lands on the same page. Thus, the definition of culture becomes the responsibility of each individual – he or she feels responsible to make an ongoing, positive contribution to your organization’s culture every day.

If you want to lead and inspire, you need to rethink breakfast! Wake up, crack those problems onto the griddle and get to work. I promise you it’ll be a healthy start to a great day. And you and your team just might end up eating everyone else’s lunch...