

Getting published in 2012

 By Allison Cooper

10 Jan 2012

While 2012 will bring another hard year for some brands and their consumers, there are others which will continue to perform really well.



What is it that makes one stand out from the other? Quite simply, generating positive publicity for the brand in such a way that it's constantly top-of-mind and enables consumers to engage with and experiment with it.

What creates positive publicity for a brand? In 2012, marketers must seek out trends that not only enable a brand to engage with consumers, but also ensure that they are constantly breaking through the media's gatekeeping role to ensure newsworthy publicity opportunities.

1. QR codes

[Quick response \(QR\) codes](#) have taken the spotlight in the public eye. Not only are there various media on which to print them - from t-shirts, mugs, caps to Z-Cards and magazines - but they enable consumers to interact with the brand by engaging their attention.

Any publicity campaign featuring a QR code in 2012 will be well worth its salt, as the opportunities for directing consumers and the media to websites, blogs, online competitions and consumer surveys are endless.

2. Engaging consumers at their leisure

With today's fast-paced lifestyle, consumers have less and less 'downtime' in which to relax and spend quality time with family and friends. As such, the last things they want to be bombarded with during this time are advertising, marketing and in-your-face sales people.

Brands hoping to engage consumers when they are open to absorbing the advertising message need to do so subtly, like after their drink or meal with very clever creative and samples inside the bill folder.

From publicity opportunities in trade and consumers media to word-of-mouth viral publicity, this trend is set to boom in 2012.

3. Social media

Social media is rapidly changing the way that news is reported. It's instant, which means that the reputation you have been trying so hard to build can be destroyed via one person's tweet which becomes a viral campaign before you've even had a chance to log onto Twitter or Facebook.

In 2012 we will see brands realising that they have to be alert, quick and, most of all, honest. Social media is an ideal medium in which to engage consumers. Essentially, they choose to follow and interact with you, which means you now have direct access to them without having to go through a middleman who may or may not change the actual message you were hoping to portray.

In terms of publicity generation, there will definitely be a greater move towards incorporating social media into any publicity plan.

4. Integrity and trust

Integrity and trust are simple words. Yet, so few brands have learnt what they mean to consumers and how they can go so far when it comes to generating loyalty - and thus sales!

The increasingly competitive consumer landscape will demand integrity and trust from brands in 2012. If you do it right, your efforts will be worth talking about to ensure you are kept top-of-mind.

5. Effective communication

Enabling your consumers to get a better understanding of who you are, what you do, and how your products will benefit them is of the utmost importance to ensure loyalty to your brand.

In 2012, it won't be as much about the actual brand name, but what that brand is doing to assist its consumers during tough economic times.

Whether this involves loyalty programmes, special offers or giving back to communities through [corporate social investment](#) programmes makes no difference. It's not going to be about what you do, but how well you do it and how effectively you communicate about it that counts.

6. Going green

What does your carbon footprint look like? Are you making strides when it comes to preserving the environment and assisting your consumers to get rid of your product's packing after they have consumed it?

All environmental issues, as with [COP17](#) in 2011, will continue to be a major focus during 2012 and beyond.

As carbon footprints and conserving the environment are so newsworthy right now, any effort you make - as long as it's genuine and makes a difference - should be of interest to environmental and other publications that consumers read.

With the economy as it is, consumers also want to make what they can from recycling or trading in their used goods. Help them to do this, and you are all set for a more prosperous 2012.

These are just a few of the trends we will see brands resorting to, to ensure consumer loyalty and keep themselves in the spotlight in 2012.

In order to survive in such a consumer-savvy environment, you have to be creative. But, make sure you understand the basics:

- What do your consumers want and need?
- How can you best reach and communicate with them?
- What are they reading?
- What do they want to hear about?

Do you have what it takes to reach beyond puff and create actual news in 2012?

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