

Ten top press tips



On 24 March 2011 over 100 press and PR professionals from the cultural sector were brought together by the AMA for *PR and the Changing Media* – a summit on the changing role of press and PR in the arts. The day was crammed with ideas and conversation (well, they were PR people after all). These are some of the recurring themes, but it is hard to summarise such a lively day in ten points: the report of the day can be found on the AMA website www.a-m-a.co.uk

1. Some things don't change. As fast as the world changes around us, many old things – such as 'a good photo is still invaluable' – still hold true.
2. One of the reasons for this is that although people talk about the online 'world', it is not a different world. It is this world – just new ways of communicating and new tools to do what we've always done. If you're daunted by them, get in there and get your hands dirty. Play with new apps, social media, etc. – they don't bite and you'll soon get the hang of them.
3. We do have to consider what a journalist is these days – with the rise of 'citizen journalists', blogging, tweeting and other 'amateur' outlets, the line between the 'audience' and the 'press' is blurred. Also, it turns out, journalists are people too!
4. The old media are not dead. More people than ever watch television and arguably a big article in a major paper is still the most effective thing. Consider the amount of journalism disseminated through social media – it's just links to the traditional media online.
5. Communication these days is all about the multiplicity of distribution methods and the scarcity of attention. Now more than ever, we have to find ways of catching and holding that attention.
6. Stay authentic, true to your message and your company's voice. Don't feel pressured by the new ways of communicating into using a tone that doesn't feel appropriate. Don't be rushed by the immediacy of communications these days into reacting in an unconsidered way or going off at half-cock. Don't be fooled into becoming indiscreet – new media invite dialogue and it is easy to think that if there's no reaction to an announcement that nobody's interested and we feel pushed into becoming sensationalist.
7. Email is the bane of journalists' lives. Or, you should email them more. Interestingly, both things seem to be true. The best that can be said is to try to personalise emails to make them relevant and stand out.
8. Feed the little fish – the regional media and student journalists. With the former, not only is regional coverage good *per se*, but also the nationals look to the regionals for stories. And be nice to student journalists because they might be the next Richard Morrison. And just because we should all be nice!
9. Try some quality stalking. Okay, this is just another way of saying what we all know – get to know the journalists and their interests. But new media give us new ways of doing this. Following journalists on Twitter can give valuable insights: if you reply to their tweets, they may follow you back, then you can DM them, and bang, you've got an in.
10. Find the people who were variously called the amplifiers, the tent poles, the attention attractors, the nodes. Use the clout of cast members (especially 'stars') to reach new people. Or find people who are just talking about you a lot using Tweet Reach, Google Alerts, etc. Befriend them! ●



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