



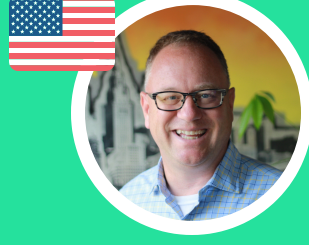
WORLDCOM
Public Relations Group

2021 Predictions from Worldcom Public Relations Group Partners



PART 1:

2021 PR & CONTENT MARKETING PREDICTIONS



Christopher Baldwin
CEO & Founder
True Digital Communications
Ohio, United States



Post-COVID, Experiential Marketing Is Going To Be Off-The-Charts

Whether it's hearing a musician at your local bar or splurging on a dream vacation that once seemed too indulgent, the post-COVID era is going to see a bigger shift to focus on experiences. While personal budgets vary, many will be willing to pay more than pre-COVID times for memorable experiences; companies, cities, entertainment venues and others will be discovering ways to market and deliver on those expectations while balancing safety.

Traditional Media Will Make Their Comeback

Comeback? Although they never left, traditional media like newspapers, radio, TV, and posters have been considered to go extinct for years now. Yet during the pandemic, times of fake news and social unrest, people are looking for serious and reliable media they can trust – so they turn to the classic media channels again.

Social Selling Will Be The Keyword For 2021 Communications

Social media will remain an ideal way to reach customers from every industry. The use and maintenance of company's profiles on social media serves as a tool to increase the awareness of the brand. With an elaborate profile structure, social selling continues to use topics that set the company apart from its competitors.



Corinna Voss
Managing Director
HBI Helga Bailey GmbH
Munich, Germany



PR & MARCOM



Stefan Pollack
President & CFO
The Pollack Group
Los Angeles, United States



the pollack group

Communicate Direct-To-Consumer

Brands and companies will find themselves in a ceaseless hard news cycle. Unless a brand is making news about something related to current events, it will be challenging to breakthrough. Additionally, 2020 changed the way consumers interact and trust the media, influencers, and social media information. They are less inclined to consume news about a brand or program because they have reverted to relying on the news media for hard news. Communications in 2021 should be made directly to the consumer. Creative and engaging virtual interactions and experiential VR and AR programs will still win the day for the first half of 2021. They can be amplified on social media to propel them through paid social media to reach audiences effectively.

Brands And Companies Should Inspire Hope

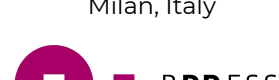
2020 was universally reviled, and so as a society, we enter an era of healing and hope as we work together to repair communities. Communication during this time should be about hope. Cynicism on one end of the spectrum, or empty inauthentic promotion on the other, will not resonate. Instead, brands and companies need to key into making their communities better in a real and tangible way. They need to use empathy with audiences, find out what they need, and deliver on that. Communications programs dedicated to helping to lift communities will resonate.

Being Relevant, Thoughtful, Sensitive And Human Will Pay Off

People are watching how brands and leaders communicate, and judging them accordingly. Relevance will be now more important than ever. Everyone is looking for what will help them through this uncertain time: content that will provide information, entertainment or valuable insights; a product that will make their lives or job easier; a thought leader that offers insight they haven't considered or help identify new ways to survive market uncertainty. It will become fundamental to be thoughtful, human and authentic in any external and internal communications efforts. Being perceived as insensitive will be damaging to a brand.



Diego Biasi
Founder & CEO
BPRESS
Milan, Italy

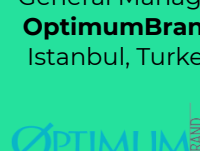


The "Human Digital" Will Take Over Consumer Markets

Thinking digital with humanity will be key next year for consumer marketing: digital now drives most processes. Innovative digital tools will be blended with physical presence and will enhance the emotional experience of products: it's the era of "Phygital PR". In order to stand-out, brands must provide a seamless, streamlined experience, making the user's experience meaningful beyond transactional.



Seyhan Ayel
General Manager
OptimumBrand
Istanbul, Turkey



Virtually Connected, Socially Distanced Year

A significant part of the year is likely to remain in the "new normal" state, with many people working from home, so internal communications will be crucial to maintain the relationships and united teams. Many campaigns will be digital only; with social media channels and influencers high in demand. As different social media channels have different target groups, the right strategy, right channels, right messages and the diversification / adaptation of the messages according to the channels will be critical for success. Utilization of AI backed strategy / research tools and message testing could save clients a lot of time and money in these difficult times, hence a different breed of communication strategists will be emerging globally.

Creating New Content Formats To Engage In New Ways

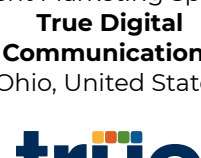
I expect to see companies innovate their content marketing and omnichannel marketing strategies to deliver new content in new formats. Many companies will begin looking at how to up-level beyond blog posts, whitepapers and other content to provide more value and a more meaningful and robust CX before, during and after the purchase journey.

Virtual Events Are Here to Stay

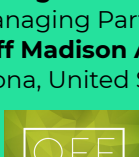
Virtual events will continue throughout 2021 and beyond, and will become more innovative, creative and engaging. Even when we can return to in-person conferences and trade shows, I anticipate event planners will continue to offer a virtual ticket option in addition to in-person passes.



Ciara Simiele
Content Marketing Specialist
True Digital Communications
Ohio, United States



Roger Hurni
Managing Partner
Off Madison Ave
Arizona, United States

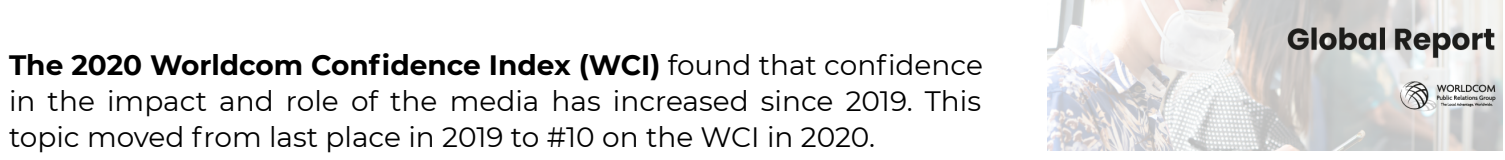


If You're Not Digital First, You're Last

When COVID-19 began, consumers shifted buying behaviors quickly: buying online, creating alternate workout routines, adopting new forms communications as examples. These behaviors have turned into habits — mostly with online implications. Companies that don't take a digital first approach in their operational models and their customer communications are going to find themselves on the losing end of revenue share. Many organizations are already begun a digital transformation. In 2021, it will continue to accelerate at a pace we've never seen before.

Communicating Confidently With The Media Will Be Important To Protecting Brand Image And Reputation In 2021

The 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index (WCI) found that confidence in the impact and role of the media has increased since 2019. This topic moved from last place in 2019 to #10 on the WCI in 2020.



The WCI is a living study that uses a breakthrough approach powered by artificial intelligence (AI), which allows us to discover the issues that concern leaders globally – and their confidence levels in addressing them. Topics and sentiments are drawn from online conversations of **over 54,000 CEOs and CMOs around the world.**

In the 2020 report, we provided results for 36 countries compared to 15 in 2019. We expect this to grow to 46 countries by the end of 2020. We are confident that the insight delivered by the WCI will enable organizations to develop key strategic campaigns that create a meaningful impact in 2021.

See The Full Results Of The 2020 WCI Report

Every year Worldcom Public Relations Group draws on the expertise of its **2000+ communications professionals** to predict the environment that will face its clients in the year ahead. Inevitably, as a global partnership, many of these predictions have an international flavor. If you want to get a picture of what the communications landscape may look like in your own country, we have teams in **115 cities, in 49 countries on six continents**, ready to talk to you.

We hope these will help increase the certainty of your success in the year ahead.

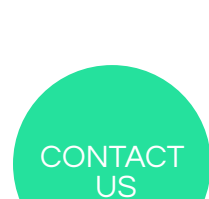
For more information on Worldcom please contact:

toddlynch@worldcomgroup.com

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