

Lines between marketing, PR sometimes blurred

In the past, most larger companies had two separate departments, one for marketing and other for public relations (PR). In most cases, they worked independently, with marketing focused on generated sales and the PR team working on building favorable relationships with core audiences.

Those days are long gone.

Successful companies have realized that marketing and PR complement each other and should work in coordination with each other, not independently. Doing so makes for an overall stronger message and one that resonates with a broader audience.

Social media has helped drive the recognition that a strong marketing effort also needs to incorporate a well thought out and strategic PR plan.

The reality is social media users don't want to be bombarded with advertising on the platforms where they spend their time. It's not why they are using Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and an array of other platforms.

Studies have shown that social media users use their platforms for social interaction,



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information seeking, networking, learning about current events, researching products they are thinking about buying or to simply pass the time.

The simple reality is that traditional marketing is less effective on social media platforms. Users don't want to be inundated with ads showcasing how great a product or service is.

Instead, if they are interested in a product or service, they want to hear from those who have used the product, not from the company that created it.

It's the positive personal experiences that create a willingness from others to try it.

Think about how many times you've

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bought a costly new product, booked a vacation or even tried a new restaurant.

You've likely sought out reviews from family and friends or looked online for com-

ments from others who have used the product, vacationed where you're seeking to go or ate at the restaurant you're interested in trying.

It's these personal experiences and reviews that people are seeking that helps drive their decision process.

That's where the line between marketing and PR has blurred the most.

Whereas marketing often focuses on the bells and whistles, good PR strategists develop tactics that work to engage their audiences, encourage the sharing of their experiences and, if something is negative, glean insight on why it was negative and work to make it better.

Now, I'm not saying traditional marketing is dead or even dying for that matter. Far from it. It's an essential component to reach potential customers.

However, integrating PR into the mix generates an even stronger outreach campaign that's likely to produce greater results.

Cole Buergi is vice president of business development at Leonard & Finco Public Relations.

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Northwoods Endeavors LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Atlas Venture Group LLC, Bradley Arndt, N4180 County Road E, Appleton, 54130

Luville LLC, MLF Corporate Services LLC, 2501 E. Enterprise Ave., Appleton, 54913

AA Woodworks LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Hilltop Cabin Rentals LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

GW LLC, MLF Corporate Services LLC, 2501 E. Enterprise Ave., Appleton, 54913

Triad Property Designs LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Cynet Health Inc., Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Leadership Conference Education Fund, Corporate Creations Network Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Appleton, 54914

Nationwide Recovery Incorporated, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Madtown Medical LLC, Legalinc Corporate Services Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Suite L, Appleton, 54914

Maikie LLC, Legalinc Corporate Services Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Suite L, Appleton, 54914

McGinn Construction LLC, Shane McGinn, 804 Monroe Street, Little Chute, 54140

Boutique LLC, Legalinc Corporate

Services Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Suite L, Appleton, 54914

Reverie AA LLC, April Reno, 1515 E. College Ave., Appleton, 54915

Momma's Love's CBD LLC, Cole Erickson, 808 East Atlantic Street, Appleton, 54911

The Humble Forager LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Blanket Holdings LLC, MLF Corporate Services LLC, 2501 E. Enterprise Ave., Appleton, 54913

Blue Energy Design LLC, Resident Agents Inc., Registered Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Q Music LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Kreibels LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Wayfinder Technology LLC, Legalinc Corporate Services Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Suite L, Appleton, 54914

Apple Creek Elk Farm LLC, Chad Michael Vanderloop, N1835 Emery Lane, Kaukauna, 54130

Karrow Peterson Properties LLC, Nathan Karow, 520 W. Capitol Drive, Appleton, 54911

Do-Up LLC, Amy Seefeldt, 1615 N. Nicholas Street, Appleton, 54914

Hollymitsyoga LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Purevant Living LLC, Stephanie Krubsack, W1171 Greiner Road, Kaukauna, 54130

Rainbow Finance LLC, Corporate Creations Network Inc., 4650 W. Spencer

Street, Appleton, 54914

CAA Enterprises LLC, Michael Smith, 3020 College Ave., Appleton, 54915

Vienna Avenue Apartments LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54914

Santek All Weather Consulting LLC, Northwest Registered Agents LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Connect People to People Inc., Legalinc Corporate Services Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Appleton, 54914

Loon Patrol LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Haircuts for Men LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave. Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Conclast LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Baked Goods Market LLC, Legalinc Corporate Services Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Suite L, Appleton, 54914

Tranquility Holdings Group LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Retail Operators LLC, Corporate Creations Network Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Appleton, 54914

Gifskin LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Sol Media LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Against the Current LLC, Jeffrey Lawrence Butz, 2310 S. Gladys Ave., Appleton, 54915

Strategic Compliance Services LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave.,

Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Tequila LLC, Registered Agents Inc., 4211 N. Lightning Drive, Ste. 333, Appleton, 54913

Wellness Studio LLC, Mikhaila Weister, 4076 W. Spencer Street, Appleton, 54915

The Be Friendly Movement LLC, Valerie Plath, 2061 Greengrove Lane, Kaukauna, 54130

Stardust Genetics LLC, Shaka Waddell Robinson, 4211 N. Lightning Drive, Ste. 333, Appleton, 54913

Waterfront Properties LLC, Kevin W. Davidson, Esq, 120 E. 4th Street, Kaukauna, 54130

Rockland Rental LLC, Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Black Hawk Phase IV LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

LVD Concepts Inc., Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Appleton, 54913

Rabine Snow Pros LLC, Corporate Creations Network Inc., 4650 W. Spencer Street, Appleton, 54914

Jesuit Volunteers, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Lucky Lost Inc., Northwest Registered Agent LLC, 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Cure SV LLC, Resident Agents Inc., 2800 E. Enterprise Ave., Suite 333, Appleton, 54913

Madmar Restoration & Property Management LLC, William Thomas Madura, 539 N. Clark Street, Appleton, 54911

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