



# The Communicator's Guide to *Digital PR*

By Charlene White

# Introduction

Hey there fellow PR practitioner...I'm Charlene White and I help PR/Communications professionals 'up' their Digital PR game.

As you will already know, the world of Public Relations and Communications has changed dramatically in the past decade thanks to the emergence of digital, data and a range of new channels and tech tools.

After 20 years working in PR (both agency and corporate) across three continents, I've seen a lot of change.

I also personally know how hard it is to keep up.

It's difficult enough dealing with all the issues and daily demands of your day job, let alone figure out what else you need to do to evolve your PR capabilities as things change.

For me, I had that dreaded 'uh-oh' moment a few years ago. I was working in my dream corporate PR job and saw things were changing fast...but had no idea where to start.

Sure, I had bolted on a bit of social media like everyone else – but knew I wasn't going nearly far enough with my work or understanding how it all fitted into the bigger digital picture for the brand I was working for.

In hindsight, all I was really doing was fighting fires and what I now call 'random acts of PR/comms'.

Don't get me wrong...it was good work and still got results. But it really wasn't going far enough or working in an integrated way to benefit my brand's overall reputation - online and off-line back then.

That led me to embark on a huge journey of discovery regarding Digital PR.

As a result, I have been fortunate enough to learn alongside some of the world's leading experts in digital and PR.

My mission back then was to figure out where PR fitted into the digital age and how to evolve my skills to show the true value of my work.

## **What I learnt was mind-blowing!**

You see, what most PR practitioners don't realise is that we hold the keys to some of the most valuable levers in the digital world.



We just need to evolve, think and do things a little differently.

After hundreds of hours of research, experimentation and iterations, I developed a Digital PR blueprint for my own work.

It started getting amazing results.

Other PR friends and associates started asking me if I could teach them my process and it has since evolved into a full time Digital PR coaching gig.

I now coach agencies and individuals all around the globe on how to become a Digital PR expert.

I also train PR professionals for the **Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA)** and the **Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ)**. I'm also a mentor for **Auckland Institute of Technology (AUT)**'s Communications faculty.

For me, being a Digital PR coach was never the plan. I always thought I would stay working in Corporate PR in-house.

But I'm so passionate about the benefits of Digital PR and evolving our industry, I'm now on a mission to up-skill as many PR agencies and individual practitioners as I can.

Otherwise we, as an industry, risk being left behind.

One of the key things I find when working with in-house PR/Comms teams is that most find it hard to evolve given they are so busy in the trenches working on the day to day. They get stuck doing the '*same old, same old*' and never realise their true potential in the digital space. Their exec teams are also stuck in the old school world where column inches are still thought as the holy grail of PR.

I also see practitioners and teams under-estimating the value of their skills and how they contribute to the wider outcomes of the business and not measuring the true value of their work.

Other disciplines, such as Marketing and SEO, have realised the benefits of Digital PR for a brand far quicker than our industry has and have adapted it as part of their work too.

We need to evolve our own skills faster than we have as we play an integral role in the digital mix.

It's more than just leveraging digital channels.

Digital PR involves incorporating a range of new digital tools, data and insights to develop a focused strategy that grows a brand's entire digital reputation, authority and trust to get the measurable outcomes it needs.

Without reputation, which is the piece in the puzzle we are the experts at building, brands can't get the right outcomes they want from their audiences.

So here's a question for you.

Do you want to evolve your PR skills and get more measurable outcomes for your organisation?

**Given you've taken the time to download this report, I'm picking that's a 'yes' and you're curious about how Digital PR could change the game for you and your team.**

The good news is, I've done all the hard work for you and can show you a way to evolve your skills and become a trusted Digital PR advisor – and fast.

Not only will it help you get more measurable results, but it will help you stand out from the sea of other traditional PR practitioners at a time when Digital PR capabilities are in high demand.

I've written this report to give you a brief taster of why you need to evolve your skills to a more digitally-focused practitioner to ensure you continue to thrive, and get results, in the future.

All I have is one simple request...you actually do something with this report.

The more PR practitioners that evolve and can hold their own in the digital arena, the better off our collective industry (globally) will be.

Happy reading!

*Charlene*

# The current 'state of play' for the PR industry

Let's face it, digital has changed the game for everyone.

Our audiences' are online and their expectations and reliance on digital has increased exponentially, particularly since Covid decided to come along and change our lives.

Employers expectations have also changed.

They want PR experts who can show them the future of PR and build authority, reputation and trust with their audiences to get the measurable outcomes they need..whether that be commercial, social or behavioural.

In the last couple of years, I've heard from a number of Communications recruiters who have also told me the number of PR job specs they get requiring digital skills has increased significantly in the past year.

If you want more proof of the changing tide towards Digital PR, a recent study by [Seek](#) showed that Marketing & Communications is one of the fastest-growing job categories, growing 12 per cent month-on-month, with demand for digital skills most sought after within our sector.

***"While the media and marketing jobs are on the rise currently, professionals in the space are being urged to focus on digital skills in order to future-proof their roles." (SEEK ANZ managing director Kendra Banks)***

There's good news and bad news for the PR industry. The bad news is we have been slow at evolving our PR skills, realising the value of our craft in the digital world and putting it into practice.

In the meantime, Marketers and SEO pros have seen how useful PR is when adapted to digital and are using our craft (story-telling and pitching directly to media) as a subset of their own work.

Why? Because it helps them build authority online and get outcomes.

The good news is I see loads of opportunity for our industry.

There are so many new digital tools, data and techniques we can now incorporate into our work that makes us better as practitioners and also provides with more measurable outcomes to show the true value of our work.

There is also massive opportunity for you and your team to become a stand-out expert in this evolving area to elevate your career longer-term, given Digital PR skills are in hot demand.

If you need more convincing, here's five key reasons why you need to make Digital PR part of your, or your team's, core capabilities.

# 1. Media

Let's hit the biggest elephant in the room first.

Have you noticed how much harder it is to pitch to media, especially stories which used to easily make the news threshold?

How many times in the last year have you, or your team, pitched a story only to have the journalist come back to you to tell you they're too busy, it's not a story or to buy an ad?

How hard is that to then explain to your peers or your CEO?

If anything, we realised over the last few years how fragile our media industry (globally) actually is. Paywalls, subscription models and front page banners asking for donations to 'keep quality journalism alive' have now become common place.

While media play a critical role in society the of what the industry will look like in a few years is uncertain.

Our audiences also have access to more channels at their finger-tips than ever before. Media are now just one channel in the mix. What's more, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer over the past few years, confidence in media is slowly decreasing.

Traditionally, PR/Communications has always been seen as predominantly media relations and most PR practitioners still put it at the centre of everything. But we are so much more than that. It just doesn't make sense for us, as an industry, to continue to put the majority of our eggs in that one basket anymore.

We just need to realise the wider value of our work, beyond column inches, and the true impact it can make to a brand's overall reputation – both online and offline.

I'm not saying stop using media altogether as they still play an integral role in the Digital PR mix. If leveraged right, media play a huge part in the way we can grow a brand's online authority. But it all comes down to the way you plan your strategy and how it all fits together...which requires going wider than traditional PR.

We also need to educate our clients and C-suites that PR is more than just column inches. Sometimes having an exec's face on the front page of a major daily doesn't always bring the measurable outcomes they need for their organisation. I know...because we can track that all now.

There are sometimes other, more efficient avenues and publications that engage your audiences and get better, measurable outcomes for your brand.

The great thing about Digital PR is that it uses an integrated model which provides more control of the story in a way that builds a brand's online reputation, authority and trust, long-term, more than ever before.

And best part...you can also better measure it all now to show the true impact of your work.

## *2. Others have discovered the value of PR*

As already mentioned, Digital PR is now in hot demand...particularly given Covid forced everyone to live, work and socialise online more than ever before.

Other disciplines such as Marketing and SEO, have recognised the value of Digital PR and have adopted it as part of their wider remit of work also. Hybrid agencies are also now appearing, offering marketing (content and digital), social, SEO and Digital PR as a complete package.

Why? Because they've realised Digital PR is critical to building the much-needed visibility, reputation, authority and trust online with audiences that a brand needs in order to achieve the outcomes it wants.

Without trust from audiences and stakeholders, there are no outcomes for a brand. PR helps establish and maintain that trust.

I have also seen a number of PR agencies and in-house teams hiring Digital Marketers within their teams in the hope of solving this issue given their current teams don't have the digital capabilities. Smart...but they're wired differently and it can still be problematic.

We need to own the Digital PR space ourselves.

Otherwise we risk being left behind.

I regularly hear war stories from PR practitioners who have found themselves falling short when it mattered because they lack the digital knowledge needed to hold their own during conversations with peers, agencies or even with prospective employers.

We must change this! In order to thrive and compete in the future, you and your team need to understand where PR fits into the overall digital mix and develop the skills to create an effective Digital PR strategy that gets results.

### *3. Managing your brand's entire digital reputation*

Most PR/Communications practitioners found our way into this profession because we all had one thing in common – we love writing and story-telling.

The good news is now, more than ever, quality, authentic content is the thing that builds trust and reputation with audiences...especially in the online world. Again, this is our time to shine.

But here's the thing – it's no longer enough just to be a good writer for humans anymore. Engagement with good quality content is another key driver that builds online reputation for a brand.

We now need to understand how content works online and then design our campaigns for both humans and search engine spiders.

Search is a key part of the equation when building online visibility, reputation and trust. As PR practitioners, we need to understand how to leverage things like SEO, keyword research and using data and new digital tools to ensure your brand can be found when and where your hottest audiences are searching for it, in addition to leveraging media and social.

It's a foreign concept for many PR practitioners who haven't taken the time yet to figure out how to gear content for the online world.

I'm guilty of that too in the past and always gave it to someone else to sort. Unfortunately what I have found is that a lot of the time it's not done well, if at all, by others either.

Obviously writing for humans and doing that well is our core objective. But we have to also now gear our content properly and be control where it ends up online.

It's what I call managing a brand's entire digital footprint.

It's just knowing what to do and creating a Digital PR strategy for it...one that goes well beyond traditional PR and being a good writer. The best thing is it only takes a few extra steps in your process to really make a difference for your work.



We also need to understand the correlation between what we do in the media and on social has a direct impact on how and where your client turns up overall online.

Creating connections and endorsement for a brand online has a huge bearing on where it is found and how much engagement it gets from the right audiences it needs. And there are lots of other things in between that we need to add into the PR mix to ensure we have a true digital focus and get the right outcomes for our organisation.

When you realise how it all works together, it provides massive opportunities for you and your brand.

Now admittedly, this concept can seem complicated at first for traditional PR practitioners to get their heads around...let alone implement.

And that's ok. I get that. It took me years to figure out. But we can't ignore it any longer. It needs to be part of our PR skillset.

We now need to go wider than just focusing on media and organic social and also plan our work differently using an integrated mix of channels i.e. owned, earned, shared and paid media in a way that consciously builds a brand's online trust and reputation.

Understanding how Digital PR works is the first step and then using it to your brand's advantage the next so it is front and centre, wherever audiences are looking for it.

It's what I call '**creating a digital omnipresence**' with media, social and Search.

When it all works together, it has an incredible impact on a brand's digital reputation or footprint – which is all measurable and attributable to your PR efforts.

**If there's one thing you learn this year, it's how to design and leverage a Digital PR strategy to get more measurable results for your organisation.**

## *4. Communications has never been in more demand*

The last couple of years have seen a fire storm of crisis emerge globally – not only from a health perspective thanks to Covid, but also from a political, social and economic perspective.

If it has taught organisations anything, it's the value of good communications – both internally and externally. This is truly PR/Communications' time to shine...we just need to do some PR on ourselves!

Business leaders, some of which have traditionally preferred to stay under the radar when it comes to commenting on contentious social issues, have been forced to communicate with their audiences and with their people more than ever before.

As a result, they have also realised how critical communications is to the overall success of a business and how they need to go wider than just talking about their products and services.

Audiences want more from organisations, including full transparency on things like sustainability, health and safety, diversity and inclusion practices before they make decisions or take action.

Get it wrong and it can cost an organisation dearly.

At the heart of all of this is good quality communications which PR/Communications practitioners are best placed to provide.

But it can't just be a short-term approach during a crisis. It needs to be a longer-term view.

Digital PR can help tell a brand's story and increase its visibility, authority and trust with an audience beyond traditional PR's capabilities. It ensures your brand shows up in the right place online, with the right stories, when and where audiences are searching for them.

## *5. Measuring the true value of PR*

There has never been a better, easier way to show the true value of our work than now. Digital provides us with so much data (most of which is accessible for free) and many different ways to show the true impact we create, over and above the dreaded sentiment and column inches metrics of the past.

Both these measurement techniques have always perplexed me as they don't actually measure what audiences did with your work after it went out.

Now there is a better way to measure PR beyond column inches and sentiment.

Digital PR can help you show the true impact of your work, how your audiences are engaging with it and what action they are taking as a result...which is a game changer given you can now tie it back to business outcomes!

# *Final thoughts...*

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We are living in very changeable times.

Yet, I truly believe the future is bright for the PR/Communications industry. Our ability to manage crisis, raise awareness and grow a brand's reputation has never been more in demand.

We just have to stretch ourselves, beyond traditional PR, to serve and grow our brands better and ensure our industry continues to remain relevant.

Digital PR helps us go wider with our work, achieve real measurable results for brands and also ensures your long term career success.

I can help get you there.

Regardless of where you are in the world, I can show you how to plan, execute and measure an effective Digital PR strategy.

My Digital PR Blueprint helps you see the bigger picture and gives you all the tools, know how and processes to plan better strategies that set you up for ongoing success in the future.

I look forward to showing you your Digital PR future soon!

*Charlene*

# *Make 2023 your Digital PR transformation year*

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- Be more than just a media relations expert or team
- Have a clear understanding of how PR fits into the digital world and how to go wider with your work, using data, digital tools and an integrated mix of channels.
- Have a clear roadmap and blueprint of how to leverage Digital PR to elevate your brand's digital reputation and online visibility
- Develop effective Digital PR strategies that create visibility, reputation and trust online where and when your audiences are searching for you.
- Have the confidence and know-how to better measure the true impact and outcomes of your PR work.
- Incorporate a range of new digital tools (many of which are free) that provide more insights for your work
- Have the confidence to be a Digital PR expert and hold your own within your business and externally.

**Book my Digital PR course now!**

# What PR people say...

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## Here's what just a few of Charlene's PR clients say about her Digital PR program:

*"Charlene brought her expertise to our comms team at just the right time. What was meant to be an in-person training course became a series of virtual sessions during the first lockdown in early 2020, just as the world embraced digital communication in a way never seen before.*

*Charlene inspired us with effective and practical strategies to help us deliver stronger results for our organisation. The media landscape and digital space is evolving so rapidly so her insight and access to the latest digital tips and technologies was extremely valuable.*

*Our team learnt a lot and has since adapted the way we operate so we can fully embrace the future of PR. I highly recommend Charlene's Digital PR program to anyone wanting to learn more about how to elevate a brand's presence online."*

**Joanne Mahon, Chief Communications and Brand Officer,  
Southern Cross Healthcare Group**

*"There is a shortage of people who can provide the expert public relations insights and digital nous that Charlene brings to the table. What sets her apart is the ability to provide both - simultaneously pairing a well-informed communications strategy built off years of experience with the cutting edge technical knowledge needed to execute and achieve results. Charlene is that rare person who can authoritatively do it all and is a real asset to any organisation seeking to thrive in the modern PR environment."*

**Wade McCagh, Digital Communications Lead  
Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**

*"This course blew our minds!*

*My agency took Charlene's Digital PR course in 2020 and it blew our minds! It has provided us with some great ideas for not only doing our own Digital PR better, but also for advising clients. Unlike a lot of courses, Charlene also provides some great practical tips and tools that provide step-by-step guidance so that our team can implement what we've learned. I would recommend her Digital PR program to all other agencies and in-house PRs."*

**Heather Claycomb, MBA, APR, FPRINZ  
Owner/Director, HMC Communications Limited**



*"This course is transformational. Charlene's able to clearly explain this new world in plain English, covering why Search and SEO is just as key to PR/Communications and how it can work hand-in-hand with traditional channels to build an organisation's online presence. Her course is a real eye opener, covering simple and cost effective steps that communicators can take towards improving their online presence.*

*Thoroughly recommend it."*

**Duncan Croft, Head of Communications &  
External Relations, ATEED**

*"Charlene's Digital PR course absolutely blew our team away! No one has ever taught us so much about digital content, applications and maximising digital presence like Charlene. Her wealth of knowledge on digital strategies, research and evaluation is exceptionally thorough. Don't hesitate - do the course!"*

**Glenda Dobbyn, Head of Communications,  
Wise Group**

***"Charlene's Digital PR course is AMAZING!"***

*"Charlene's DigitalPR knowledge is immense, and combined with her depth of expertise as a Digital PR professional and trainer, her program is invaluable. Charlene really helped us understand what has changed and what we needed to do to strengthen our agency's Digital PR offering. I would highly recommend her course and expertise."*

**Celia Crosbie, Director, Scope Media**

*Charlene is an amazing Digital PR practitioner. She is clearly passionate about what she does and that can be seen throughout her course. Her knowledge and research in this field is extensive. She provides great insight and ideas and her workshop covers practical tools and approaches that will help take your Communications career to the next level.*

**Michelle Dsouza, PR Consultant**

*Taking the Digital PR course has been a total game changer. Charlene's expertise and advice provided me with actionable steps that I could take to up my game. I would highly recommend this course."*

**Hannah Edwards, Communications and Marketing Manager**

*"I really enjoyed this Digital PR course and immediately found ways it could help my approach to working with clients. Great insights, tools and a course focused on driving business deliverables. I highly recommend it to anyone in PR and Communications."*

**Steve Blackburn, Scope Media**

# About Charlene White

With an extensive background in journalism and Corporate Communications, Charlene has cracked the code when it comes to leveraging an integrated Digital PR strategy with new tools, data insights and processes to successfully reach key audiences in today's complex digital world.

Having worked in high profile comms roles in New Zealand, the UK and Middle East, Charlene launched DigiPR in 2019 with the aim of helping PR and Communications professionals evolve their skills and elevate their work further with Digital PR.

She has distilled more than 20 years of Communications' experience and research into an easy-to-follow digital communications process that captures audiences in both 'Browse' and 'Search' mode. There is no other course in the world like it.

Charlene's experience spans a range of roles, industries and organisations. She has managed everything from major crisis' situations, Stock Exchange listings, mergers and acquisitions, through to Consumer PR events/launches and stakeholder management projects.

She is a highly sought after PR coach and consultant in Australasia, a Digital PR trainer for the **Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA)**, the **Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ)** and also an advisor and mentor for the **Auckland University of Technology (AUT)** Communications' faculty.



*Charlene White*  
*DigiPR Founder | Chief Digital PR Strategist*