

The
New Way
to
Get Noticed

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Getting and keeping attention in our time-starved, information-rich world requires more than just communication skills; it demands a strategy and a devoted appetite for the journey.

It's never been easy to capture an audience, but today you are facing a multi-faceted media landscape that is more vast and more complex than ever.

According to a recent report by IDC research, 80 percent of us check our smartphones within fifteen minutes of waking up. That means most of us are rolling over in our first seconds of consciousness to say good morning to our smartphone screen before we even say it to our partner!

Media and information are everywhere, and billions of us are habitually tuning in throughout the day, beginning with that morning smart phone check. What did we miss while we were sleeping? Who liked the Facebook picture we posted last night? What are our friends sharing this morning on Instagram? Is there a text message we need to check?

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In a sense, the new media environment feels like the Wild West. On television, many of today’s highest rated programs are reality-based and feature families who do things like procreate excessively or become famous when their patriarch represents OJ Simpson in court. Twitter helped Paris Hilton become a household name after a sex tape first put her in the public eye. And what about the concept of going viral? Few of us can forget the moment in 2015 when frenzy erupted over whether a particular dress was blue and black or white and gold, a “story” that temporarily pushed aside substantive news. It’s easy to be cynical. We get it.

On the flip side, this new environment has given us access we wouldn't otherwise have to many of the world's most influential minds. From Reddit's "Ask Me Anything" to the TED talks featured on YouTube, new media tools have helped create and give us access to an unprecedented number of experts. Further, they have whetted our collective appetite for more.

Not only is there opportunity to create content and display it on the virtual billboard that exists online, but there is a chance to create a strategy for capturing even more value from your messages.

The Big Shift

If we look back at the media world of even ten years ago, major media outlets could be described as boulders, encircling the public. These boulders made decisions to let in whatever information they deemed worthy of consumption: and if a book, product, or message wasn't covered by "traditional" media, it was very difficult for the general public to hear about it.

Word of mouth existed, but it took much longer to take hold because it happened in physical proximity—dinner parties, places of worship, and the like—rather than via social networks that can extend far past that physical proximity.

Then came the Internet, followed by social media, which took a collective sledgehammer to those boulders, spreading pebbles across the ground and leaving those major media outlets casting a much smaller shadow over the public. As those pebbles scattered, so did our attention, fragmenting the way we consume media.

Thanks to our newfound access to high-quality, niche information, many of us now prefer to pay attention to the more specialized pebbles, which, while small, gives us exactly what we want when we want it.

Stone analogies aside, the niche outlets—and our attention—are still scattering, and they are forming a brand-new media environment.

Welcome to the age of micromedia.

The New Media Landscape

Along with traditional outlets (newspapers, magazines, radio, and television), the environment is now rife with what we call micromedia outlets—channels that are created and controlled not by large media concerns, but by everyone. Literally every individual, business, or organization is a micromedia outlet, capable of creating and sharing content online. Anyone with a smartphone can become one part camera operator, one part commentator, and one part radio host. Access to a laptop or desktop, essential for creating long form content, opens up even more possibilities.

The power once held by a select few has begun a definite shift to the individual. This means that now we needn't wait for big media with its traditional gatekeepers to express interest in our message; we can take to the public stage without them. We can become a micromedia outlet and approach others who are doing the same with their blogs, podcasts, and webinars and ask them to broadcast our messages as well. This myriad of new outlets hosted by individuals and brands are creating a new way to get attention.

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When marketers and publicists begin planning a launch strategy, far too often the discussion divides media into two categories—social media and traditional media. We believe those categories aren't productive in the new media landscape and, instead, know that media is now divided into three categories—owned media, rented media and earned media.

Owned media includes all channels that you fully own and control. Assuming your website is built on a URL you own (your name, for example), you own your website, the blog that lives there, your email list, and you fully control the content there. Owned media also includes a physical mailing list for a newsletter or other form of media. The key differentiator for owned media is that you not only control the content, you fully control the connection with the audience.

Rented media includes all media that lives on real estate someone else owns, but that has little to no barrier to entry. All social media channels are “rented” media channels because, although you have a large degree of control over the content there, you're operating on real estate someone else owns. For example, at any point Facebook can change its algorithm and limit your ability to reach your audience or Twitter could receive a complaint and shut down your feed. Rented media also includes online review sites like Yelp, advertising and other media channels that provide huge exposure for you and your brand but that you ultimately don't own.

Earned media includes channels owned by others that you must earn your way onto. For example, anyone can set up a Facebook page or advertise in *The New York Times* (assuming they have the budget), but not everyone can be interviewed on NPR, have their book reviewed in *The New York Times* or have an influencer showcase a new product on their Facebook page—you must earn that kind of visibility. Earned media includes live events where you have earned the right to speak from the stage, talk to fans at a book signing, or reach them through any other kind of forum. The great thing about earned media is that people understand there is a significant vetting process before you are invited on someone's stage and, thus, when you do get on stage, it provides a huge amount of credibility to you and your message, and people are much more likely to take action on your advice as a result.

Each category of media feeds one another in this new landscape and utilizing all three is a must for a fully integrated strategy. That said, we believe it's important to intentionally move people from earned and rented space to your owned media so that you control the connection with your audience. There are a variety of ways to do this, but the best is to weave in a clear and valuable call to action or incentive that gives audience members reached via earned and rented media a reason to head to your website. Whether it is an assessment, a downloadable workbook, or a piece of video, create something in your own space to engage visitors and turn them into a valuable audience.

Collectively, earned, owned and rented media represent and define your platform or personal brand. Like nearly everything else in today's world, your platform will be customized based on your goals, passions, message and audience.

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Using Micromedia

All of this change comes with challenges. The decisions about what was newsworthy used to be made exclusively in newsrooms, editorial meetings, and under the watchful eye of an editor or producer who had the ultimate say in what was important and what would entice. Traditional media relied on the expertise of groups of trained communicators. Micromedia outlets, on the other hand, often struggle to be both credible and relevant. Its creators, a set of brave and fledgling content creators, would do well to consider some of the key skills that journalists have used for hundreds of years to captivate us and make us crave more. These skills help those new to the game to move from a “me-first” platform to one that will appeal to the masses.

Think Like a Media Outlet

Your digital platform should be thought of and constructed as if it is your own personal media brand—your newspaper. Construct yours with an eye toward providing interesting and entertaining content on a predictable basis. You wouldn't subscribe to a newspaper filled with ads, selfies, or entirely self-focused content, so don't create one like that to represent you.

Include feature interviews, reviews, and other news we can use—the kind of information we can put into practice that, day-to-day, makes our lives better. You will be judged by the same standard that is applied to broader media.

Be Discoverable

Pay attention to your biographical information on all of your media profiles, from those at the bottom of anything you byline for a traditional outlet to the descriptions you use on your website and social media accounts. Update them frequently and be certain they include information on the book, subject, or position you are currently promoting.

Bypass standard contact forms on your website and instead direct inquiries to a personalized email address that is checked daily. Not only are customers vetting you online, but so are journalists. A Cision/George Washington University study shows that when researching stories, 89 percent of reporters look to blogs, 65 percent turn to social networking sites and 52 percent use Twitter as a resource. Make sure you can be found.

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Create Messages That Are Timely and Compelling

Be a scholar in your own field before you write. Read trade journals and newsletters, attend industry events, and become a credible voice for reporting on new trends or developments in your area of expertise. Don't parrot conventional wisdom or echo the masses, but rather share an opinion on what's happening in the world around you. Distinctive voices on topics that are trending, even within specific industries, are the most likely to create a rabid and loyal following.

Submit Your Work to Another Set of Eyes

Veto power cannot be underrated for new content providers. And while objectivity is the goal, it is impossible to be completely unbiased about your own interests and consequently your own content. Develop a process for feedback from peers and experts before you approach the public space. Engage a copyeditor for print work and a suitable audio or video editor for broadcast work and use them religiously. Nothing kills a following faster than errors or typos.

Involve Others In Your Reporting

A few weeks at the helm of a newly created micromedia outlet will make it clear that covering others in your new role is crucial to keeping your content fresh and, just as important, constant. Just as no newspaper is full of Op Eds, neither does your media outlet require that all content be created by a sole source. Integrate reviews of new products, books, or programs, interviews, and guest posts into your channel. The contributors will do more than just help you fill the space or air time, they will also bring their audiences to your channel, giving you the chance to convert them to customers.

Newsjack Carefully and Respectfully

Stories that capture the public's collective imagination and draw it away from other stories are a valid form of competition. To counteract the effect of being drowned out by the message of the moment, many instead choose to join the story. While this can be an effective way to attract attention, proceed with caution. Be absolutely certain that your expertise is adequate in the subject, that your material advances the case or brings up an overlooked component of the story, or that you can adequately defend your opinion. If you are uncertain about your ability to do any one of these things, hold your carefully crafted piece for a more opportune moment.

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Do Not Rely On Frequency Over Substance

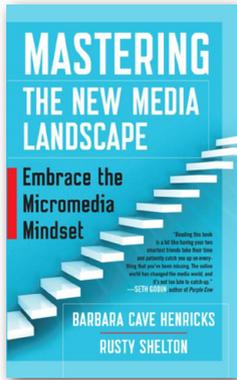
A 2014 study by the American Press Institute shows that 33 percent of all Americans consume news throughout the day across various formats, devices, and technology. One-third of us are tuning in all the time. That represents an enormous amount of attention to be secured, and the directive seems clear. The more material you create, the better chance you have of capturing that audience. But more isn't better when it is thin, poorly crafted, or insignificant.

Put together a content calendar and plan for the times when new content feels illusive. Stockpile pieces that focus on evergreen subjects that repeatedly surface in your field. A new take on an old subject is more likely to attract readers than a piece that lacks substance or forethought.

The seismic shift is how content is created, where it is housed, and who can create it has resulted in both an enormous challenge and a huge opportunity. We encourage you to seize this opportunity and embrace what we call a micromedia mindset by thinking more like a media executive than a marketer by being more interested in keeping your audience engaged over the long-term than making that quick sale or one-time impression.

Micromedia outlets often start small, gain traction and then grow loud and large enough to rival the attention and respect of major media the new media landscape demands a dedicated willingness to participate. **Those who can create high quality content very quickly and who understand how to leverage the three categories—earned, owned and rented media—will hold a decided advantage in the new race to get noticed.** 📺

Info



BUY THE BOOK | Get more details or buy a copy of [Mastering the New Media Landscape](#).

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