

Can you succeed in communications without new media?

It's hard to remember what communications was like back even a decade ago. When I started in advertising, we faxed insertion orders and delivered artwork. When I started in PR, we faxed press releases and mailed photos. Now, we all just use the Internet. In the past two or three years, we've evolved past email and launched into new media: blogs, Twitter, social networks, and so forth. "Old" media is dying a bit more every day. Newspapers are disappearing or slimming down. News broadcasts are relying on Twitter and Facebook for user interaction. We've become a nation of citizen journalists, wielding our cameraphones and uploading our viewpoints. I read somewhere that a large liquor advertiser will be spending 90% of its ad budget on new media. On the other hand, a study showed that 60% of Americans use print media to make shopping decisions.

In any case, there is a new paradigm in how people acquire information. Fewer people are turning to traditional media and more people are turning to new media. That is the reality and your communications efforts must reflect that.

A few days ago, I was having a conversation with a graphic designer. He's pretty old school, to such an extent, that although he has worked in web design, he had never heard of WordPress. I spoke with a technical writer who knows nothing about blogs, and dismissed them as useless. Do you think these people are ready for the present, not to mention the future? In my opinion, they will be left behind.

I believe that if you are in communications, you must learn about new media. You may not use it, but you need to know

about it. People are making lots of money training other people on how to use blogs and Twitter for communications efforts. In fact, for a mere \$395 you can go to an all-day Twitter conference. Why would people spend this type of money? Because we are looking to know what the next big thing will be. In the early 90s, glossy magazines were the big thing. In the early 00s, dot-com/websites were the rage. Now we are in the blogosphere.

In a sense, communications is way more challenging now than ever. We have a very segmented audience and extremely targeted media. I am not sure we have much left in the way of mass media. Communications practitioners have to become adept at many forms of media.

So, to answer my own question, no, you cannot succeed in communications without new media.

What do you think?