

Exchange4media – January 2022

PR trends of 2022.

The spirit of humanity that won in 2021 has set the stage for 2022. If 2021 was largely about 'hope', most expect 2022 to herald new beginnings. A new way built on authenticity, which has never been more important. In 2022, PR will be the custodian of this hypothesis for organizations across the three pillars of people, purpose and planet.

With the advent of digital and social media platforms people have begun to trust recommendations from peers far more than celebrated brand ambassadors. Audiences now seek authentic content or recommendations by actual consumers, more than more than promotional content from brands. Community-led storytelling is more acceptable and authentic than direct brand-led communication. PR will be required to work with brands to shape and foster a community of brand advocates. A set of loyal and vocal customers who can humanize the brand to boost brand appeal & trust, promote products & services to new cohorts, provide word-of-mouth recommendations and social media chatter. All of this is invaluable for user-generated content (UGC). 2022 will see many more brand's structure an evocative brand advocacy strategy to consciously harness community advocacy to stay relevant.

Companies and brands will continue to lean on 'purpose' by supporting a cause of choice. But as consumers get more mindful of what and how an organization really contributes, the days of purpose washing are long over. Consumers especially the young want to engage and be associated with brands that are not just saying the right things but really making a difference. Authentic and sincere efforts are the only ones that will find a voice and lend muscle to brand equity.

If anything, themes like sustainability and the environment will become even more important for brands and corporations. While some organizations are actively taking steps in this direction and serving as inspirations to others, more brands will need to do more for the environment and planet. Climate action and sustainability will need to be integrated in the ethos of every company's mission to complement the United Nations' Global Goals by 2030. Everyone needs to do their part. From use of recycled materials to waste reduction and clean energy initiatives, all will need the attention of PR in 2022 to pave the way for a more sustainable future.

Public relations has always been about storytelling, and in order to create compelling stories and narratives, our PR campaigns can exude greater authenticity if backed by research, data and insights.

**As per a report published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in July 2022, there were 692 million active Internet users in India, split almost evenly between rural and urban India. The report's projected estimates 900 million Internet users in India by 2025.*