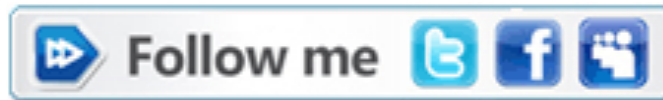


# Social Media Interview Project



Allison Belles  
Mark Clennon  
Patrick Johnson  
Drew Slater

November 2, 2009  
PUR3500  
Dr. Burns

## **Why Are We Doing This?**

The purpose of this interview project is to sit down with public relation professionals and find out how and why they use social media. In class we always here how vital learning social media will be to our future success and in this project we will actually be able to see how in real-life situations. Our exact goals are:

- To understand the purpose or roles of the use of social media.
- To understand how public relations practitioners use social media to create successful campaigns.
- To find how the structure of social media is implemented within an organization.
- To understand how has or can social media change future PR practices for an organization.

## **How We Did It?**

Before we each did our interview we all helped out critiquing the questions until they were worded exactly they were. Once the questions were set, we each reached out and made a connection in order to conduct interviews with public relations professionals. Three of us used our computers directly to record the interview, while the fourth person in our group used a traditional tape recorder. Afterwards we all made our interview an mp3 file in order to have it ready to be uploaded onto our own personal blogs.

## **What We Found**

### **The purpose or roles of the use of social media.**

“We use it for advertising. We use it for marketing campaigns. We use it for fan relations.”- Mark Neifeld

“We use social media specifically to reach out to a generation and to a population that in previous years maybe we might not have reached.”- Allen Barrett

### **How public relations practitioners use social media to create successful campaigns.**

“I think being conversational, definitely straying away from sales pitch constantly, I think you need to be relevant and put info out that people are interested in.”- Josh Hall

“Reach. I think is the big one because we already have reached 7,200 people and we have only had this up and running since June.”- Mark Neifeld

### **How the structure of social media is implemented within an organization.**

“We sort of have a group tactic. I’m probably the lead but my boss also – I consult him a lot, especially on Facebook stuff, but primarily it would be myself.”- Josh Hall

“We stream a lot of video live and we have a few people that work on our website and I think they do a lot of twitter updates for breaking news so I’d say specifically the social media outlets that we use would be: Facebook, a lot of our news anchors and weather castors all have their own pages. And CBS 3 we twitter live with all breaking news events.”- Erin Phillips

### **How has or can social media change future PR practices for an organization.**

“I mean Twitter has to change a little bit I think. I don’t think Facebook is a fad because people are using Facebook as a portal to the Internet. Sort of how AOL was, when everyone had AOL and everyone had AIM.”- Mark Neifeld

“I don’t think it’s a fad but I think we will find a lot more effective ways in the future in terms of technology and social media to network and to promote ourselves and our businesses so I don’t know if social media is a fad, I think some of the programs that we use now might be.”- Erin Phillips

“So, I think moving forward we will continue to see what the growing trends are in the society. Just like five years ago, the thought of us having Facebook and Twitter accounts were probably nonexistent and it could continue to change, as it probably will moving forward.”- Allen Barrett

## **Conclusion**

After all of the interviews were done and all of the answers analyzed, we realized how important social media is. Social media will indeed decide if we will be successful in our careers after college. Social media is a great channel to reach as many people as possible for practically free. Compared to the traditional practices of public relations such as press releases and media advisories, social media can give you instant feedback. We all realize social media is not a fad and we all need to embrace it as much as we can, so when we enter the real world, we will be able to be an expert in social media. In this day in age, social media needs to be implemented into public relations campaigns to boost awareness and help engage with your audience.

## **Appendix**

### **Drew’s Interview**

**Drew Slater: “My name is Drew Slater; I’m doing a project for my research class. I am interviewing Mark Neifeld from the Tampa Bay Lightning and my first question is: how does your company specifically use social media and what do you use it for?”**

Mark Neifeld: “We use it for advertising. We use it for marketing campaigns. We use it for fan relations. Really any aspect, if we have a ticket deal up, we might put it up on a landing page. For instance, today

we have the Octoberfest so that's our landing page for today. Two days ago was our go green night so that was our landing page, so if someone visits our site that's the first thing they see. "

"We also use it to spread our brand, for free. I mean this morning I was on there three times putting up stories about tonight, ticket special or something like that, that's 7,000 people who saw it for free. "

**DS: "You're the guy who does the tweeting as the game goes on about the score and everything?"**

MN: "I don't tweet during the game. Brian Breeseman does that because he travels with the team. So it's a little bit easier for him to do it than me watching on TV. There are two of us who do the Twitter."

**DS: "How do you measure the effectiveness of your social media?"**

MN: "There's a bunch of ways. This page right here is the inside page to our facebook, so we can tell if our numbers are growing, the page use. With facebook, you get all of the analytics. So basically, we know how effective something is. Like now if we are running a ticket promotion or if we are running a giveaway, you can see this spike right here is probably real close to 2,000 hits. So we know 1,900 people saw it for one day. We're obviously doing something. I would know to go back during the week and look at this day to see what we were doing. It takes 48 hours, but if we did something like a giveaway that is when we would have big spikes. Or if we announced a trade or we do something like that."

"And on Twitter we use a program called bit-ly. Have you ever heard of it?"

**DS: "Yeah it's the links."**

MN: " Bit-ly lets you now get the click-thrus also. If we do a story or post anything on our Twitter page with bit-ly we get the analytics with that and we get the analytics."

**DS: "Nice. Are you the person who does the social media? Do you represent the Tampa Bay Lightning social media?"**

MN: "Yes. I do all of the Facebook and Twitter for the Tampa Bay Lightning and the St. Pete Times Forum because we have a Forum website too. Brian Bresseman, like I said, does a little like when he is at the games because he has more access to the players. Brian gets some really good stuff. He's our head of public relations, so just two days ago we were on Around the Horn, PTI, ESPN.com and CBS about that naked shootout."

**DS: "Yeah I saw that. I follow that on Twitter. St. Louis was down to his sandal."**

MN: "Exactly. That was down in Brandon, so I'm here working and I can't be down in Brandon and that's why it makes sense to have two people do the Twitter."

**DS: "What do you think are the key components that make up a successful social media campaign?"**

MN: "Reach. I think is the big one because we already have reached 7,200 people and we have only had this up and running since June. But reach. I mean as many people as you can get on there, that's X amount of people you can reach X amount of times for free every single day."

**DS: "Do you think quantity over quality?"**

MN: "I was a PR major and I write in PR. I'm an AP freak. You also have to know you are on the frontline of the company. Like with the website, or Facebook or Twitter, if you make one mess up that's 7,000 people who are going to see that mess up instantly. So, whoever is running it, I feel someone with a PR background or writing background. We announce something or for instance if we announce our trades before we send out our press release so you want it to be accurate. For instance, aren't allowed to say the Lightning has traded St .Louis or if we have signed someone, you can't say that. You need to say they have agreed to terms. Just the politics about it."

**DS: "How much of your company's resources are used for social media?"**

MN: "I say in the grand scheme of things, there's really no money that goes into besides the fact they pay me to be here. And we do giveaways. That's obvious cost if we give away a T-shirt or a hat. But there's really not much that goes into it."

**DS: "How have the public relation practitioners adjusted to the social media, have they embraced it?"**

MN: "Our company has. The head of our department and Brian Breeseeman, we always joking around about Twitter and things. They love it. And when everyone is embracing it and backs up what we are doing, it makes it so much easier."

**DS: "Do you think social media is a fad?"**

MN: "I don't know. I mean Twitter has to change a little bit I think. I don't think Facebook is a fad because people are using Facebook as a portal to the Internet. Sort of how AOL was, when everyone had AOL and everyone had AIM. The problem was when AOL tried making people pay instead of other companies like Yahoo and MSN who got their revenue through advertising not from people paying. There's so much what you can do with advertising with Facebook. You can narrow it down to people that are between this age and that age, that are male, who live in this county that like hockey. There's no wasted cost because we already know they are interested."

### Patrick's Interview

**Patrick: State your name and the company that you work for please.**

Erin: My name is Erin Phillips and I work for CBS 3, it's a Philadelphia affiliate of CBS the television station.

**Patrick: What do you do with CBS 3?**

Erin: I work with community relations, public affairs department. Usually what we do is we deal with all of the pr for CBS 3 in the Philly area. And a lot of the community events. I do a lot of things with non-profit organizations and trying to get our newscasters and staff out there into the community to get them more involved.

**PJ: Awesome. Alright so this interview is going to be basically on social media. What you or your organization does with Social Media. How does your company specifically use social media? Example, how can you use list for what you use it for, whether yourself or organization?**

EP: well my company specifically doesn't use too much SOCIAL MEDIA we actually just started getting involved in it. More in the Public Affairs department we don't use it as much, but a lot in the newsroom. We stream a lot of video live and we have a few people that work on our website and I think they do a lot of twitter updates for breaking news so I'd say specifically the social media outlets that we use would be: Facebook , a lot of our news anchors and weather castors all have their own pages. And CBS 3 we twitter live with all breaking news events. Me, myself in my organization I don't have to use it as much, but the news people do.

**PJ: You've sort of answered it. Just to Elaborate: does your company currently use social media to help new or current campaigns and you stated that the news casters have face book and you twitter live with breaking up dates and all that fun stuff.**

EP: well my company recently started using Social Media to piggyback with breast cancer for the cure. We do something every year in Philly called lights for the cure where we light up the skyline pink in honor of breast cancer, so recently we started posting on our Facebook pages and twitter accounts to get people aware of the event and to get them aware of the skyline.

**PJ: How do you measure your effectiveness of social media?**

EP: Like I said we're probably not the best example to use of social media, I mean were just starting to get used to it so to measure the effectiveness of Social Media we just kind of see how many people we get to come out to our events or how many people follow with our news segments to see how is actually paying attention to the upcoming events and the upcoming programs we are going to be doing.

**PJ: Do you guys focus on feedback like for instance something someone might have RT on Twitter or something that someone might have said in reference to someone's twitter username or something off of Facebook too?**

EP: Yes we do use that a little bit a lot of feedback is important to us. Normally how we control the feedback and someone's reactions to a news segment or event is we do a lot of stuff with our website and with telethons, and with telethon messages. We record our messages all the time and see if we got positive or negative feedback on shows we are doing. But in terms of Facebook or Twitter if we get responses from people we definitely record them to see how their feeling about what we posted.

**PJ: Whose responsibility is social media at CBS ?**

EP: Well at CBS we have so many different depts. So In the news dept people handle it on their own. All of the News Casters have their own Facebook and Twitter accounts so people that are fans of them will follow them exclusively not so much CBS. So they take care of their own publicity in that aspect. But

then in the Public Affairs which is what I work in, we handle publicity for the stations, we have CBS and CW so we handle a lot of things with our events through there.

**PJ: All right, since you guys are still somewhat new. What do you think would be some key components to help create or to help push an already active campaign. So, how could you use social media to make things better?**

EP: We use social media to make things better probably by using it more and using it more effectively. I recently just sent out a tutorial to the other staff members at CBS, kind of letting them know how to use Facebook and Twitter how to use them from a business perspective rather than a personal perspective so we are trying to get people more on that page. Instead of using it for personal use instead. So if we can use that more by updating our twitters more often or letting people know exactly what we're doing or what shows are going to be on and that news programs are going to be on. Letting people know there is a schedule change. Things like that would probably make it a lot more effective for us.

**PJ: All righty, I think this is a decent question, but I guess in terms of the dept you work in or in terms of CBS as an organization what do the execs in the organization think of social media. And how have the people within community relations or public relations at CBS adjusted to it.**

EP: well the executives in the organization are broken up into sub divisions we have the general manager the programming manager the news manager things like that. I think they are adjusting to it, a lot of them are very old school but they are realizing that we are moving into a very different, technological world. So, we are trying to get them more into it, and get them to realize this is a very important thing for us to be working on. And in terms of the public relations practitioner and what we do in community relations we have adjusted to it very well. We keep up to date on the best tactics to use and social media of course is one of them so we are trying to make them a heavy part of our campaigns

**PJ: How have people in your org who deal with social media learned about SOCIAL MEDIA? I know you mentioned that you did a tutorial and sent it out to everybody else you work with. Aside from that, how has that used it how have they learned to use it? Do you guys go to seminars, is there webinars, or like a big social media training session, how does that all work?**

EP: We don't have any social media training sessions. I mean, people attending webinars can do it on their own. I think it's more of a just, learn about it, it's very popular now to Facebook, its like, who doesn't have a Facebook? I think they learn it from playing around with it. ask around, I mean, since we work in a very high end television station the amount of technology that we have at our fingertips is so plentiful that anything they wanted: webinars, seminars things like that, they can get so quickly so a lot of them can have access to that; especially a lot of the anchors. They have a lot of people that come on their shows you know, and a lot of the have to do with social media and they take tips from those people.

**PJ: So I guess what your saying is everyone takes it upon himself or herself to learn it?**

EP: Pretty much.

**PJ: Is it a situation where they are learning as they are going. Or have you noticed that some people try to study it and learn it and then implement the things they have learned.**

EP: Well some people are definitely better than others I'll say that. I think people are try implementing everything they learned more now ever since we've sent out those tutorials I think they are realizing that "hey this is something we really want people to get involved in." so I think that they are going to start taking it upon themselves to be very into social media, to twitter much more often and to update their facebook more often and to interact with a lot of people thru social media I think they didn't realize that you could @ someone on twitter and kind of have a conversation that way. I don't think they realized it was that sort of networking thing as well .

**PJ: What do you see your organization doing with respect to social media in the future? I guess this is sort of a two part-er, and the second part. Do people in your organization feel that social media could be considered a fad?**

EP: I think in my organization I think that we are going to use social media a lot more often in the future in trying to make it more part of our promotion and publicity and especially even our media aspect and our programming like telling people at the end of our news segments or at the end of our talk show at noon ever day. We say "check out the website for this," how we say check out the website for info on today's session, we can tell them to check out my twitter check out my Facebook page and you can find out things more often that way we are sort of briefed. In terms of, is Social Media being a fad to people in my office and do the execs think it's a fad. I'm not really sure. I personally, am not a huge fan of twitter I like Facebook a lot but twitter I'm not a huge fan of. I don't think it's a fad but I think we will find a lot more effective ways in the future in terms of technology and social media to network and to promote ourselves and our businesses so I don't know if social media is a fad, I think some of the programs that we use now might be.

**PJ: Ok one last questions. In terms of views at your CBS affiliate. Do you think with your news castors, anchors and personalities do you think it gives your CBS affiliate a more persona I brand, that these anchors have twitters, that way these fans or viewers can try to speak with them and interact with them one on one rather than as a CBS affiliate?**

EP: Yes I do, I think that having twitters and Facebook's really make them more of a real person not just a person you see on TV. It allows them to connect with their fans a lot more that way because it is more personal. Someone can write you a comment and you can write back so I think it definitely is a good way to reach out to the fans on a one to one level.

**PJ: Thank you for your time.**

EP: Your welcome.

## Allison's Interview

**Allison: Tell me your name and your position in your company.**

Allen Barrett: My name is Allen Barrett. I'm the Community Relations Communications Coordinator for the Buccaneers.

**Allison: How does your company specifically use social media?**

Allen: We use social media specifically to reach out to a generation and to a population that in previous years maybe we might not have reached. So, specifically Facebook and Twitter are the two newest ways that we have reached out to them. We recently in the past maybe five months have created an official Tampa Bay Buccaneers Facebook page that people can join and become fans of, just like any other club on Facebook, as well as a Twitter account where people can become followers and follow up on the latest Tweets from the Bucs.

**Allison: What are some specific campaigns or initiatives that social media has been used for within your company?**

Allen: Well, probably the most significant campaign would be the sell tickets. I don't think it's any secret that the Bucs are trying to do their best to sell tickets. This is the first year in awhile where season tickets are available and so using Twitter and Facebook to get email addresses of potential ticket holders has been a really big push for the Bucs. Being able to not only post up the most recent news on Facebook or photos from events or from practices or from games, but as well making sure we reach out to our Facebook fans about all the options that are out there for tickets has been a big move that the team has made as well and likewise on Twitter. Probably not quite as much because Twitter is so much more of a up to the, so much more of a free-flowing thoughts on paper type of system. But even so a little bit, I believe, that the team has used that to reach out and let people know that ticket sales, I'll tell you is our big push right now.

**Allison: How would you measure the effectiveness of social media? Or how do you? Like ticket sales?**

Allen: Well, ticket sales, I think, an increase in ticket sales hopefully means that we are reaching, that that's helping. Something as simple as seeing how many followers we have on Twitter. If that's increasing and we're not losing people, but more and more are adding themselves to the list everyday to find out about what's going on with the Buccaneers. That's positive and that's showing that what we're doing is hopefully it means that people want to keep learning what's going on with the team. The same with Facebook. Seeing how many fans the team has, seeing how the fans comment because they can

leave comments. They can post things. A lot of it is positive. Seeing if there is a photo out there or a group of photos or news about something the team has done. Seeing the fans and their reactions to it that they can share for the entire world to see is a good way to measure if what we are doing is positive and is having a good impact or if we might want to go in a different direction with what we are doing.

**Allison: Whose responsibility is social media in your organization?**

Allen: Our website manager who coordinates all of the content is responsible for our Twitter page and we've got an individual that works within our creative services department who handles information technology and some of the social media aspects that updates our Facebook page.

**Allison: What are the key components that make up a successful social media campaign in your opinion?**

Allen: I think first and foremost, whatever tool you are using you need to make sure that it is going to reach the intended audience and you're very aware of basically what you're trying to achieve. Facebook and Twitter are just now becoming much more popular with an older population, but particularly for Facebook for it's first few years and just up until recently was mostly strictly high school and college students. Now that's great on getting the word out about what's going on with the team and getting fans and all that, but that's not necessarily going to help you out in terms of selling tickets. So, I think first and foremost you are hitting your intended audience. Always keeping new content is very important. In this day in age with the speed of technology everything is just a click or a touch away. So, if you're not constantly updating it or it's not new and exciting, it's probably not going to keep the attention of the audience and then also making sure that not only whatever you're hitting up the audience with or reaching out with not only is it new, but it's got some diversity and it's different. If we were trying to use it to sell tickets and that's all we use it for, we're not going to get a whole lots of responses because that's not why people are fans of the Buccaneers on Facebook and that's not why they want to follow us on Twitter. They want to follow us because they want to know what's going on with the team and they are supporters of the team. So, if all we are using it for is that and all their constant updates has to do with new ticket options then we aren't making the most of it. We always need to make sure that as soon as a roster transaction is made that that's up there and they're feeling like they are getting that quicker than anybody else. We've got a community event with some great photos and a story about what the players are doing on their time off. That we're making sure that they're aware of that as well. So that we can make sure that the audience gets a well-rounded picture and it feels like their getting the whole story.

**Allison: What do the executives in your company think about social media?**

Allen: They think it's extremely important, or else we wouldn't have it. Definitely with how culture is changing and the increasing significance of social media. It's become more important than ever. Last year we didn't have a Facebook page and a Twitter page and now there's a big ad on the page of our website to follow the Bucs on those two outlets. It's definitely become much more important.

**Allison: How have people in your organization learned about social media?**

Allen: I think people learned about it social media through the media. It seems like every in regards to something like Facebook and Twitter now you're hearing it referenced in commercials, TV shows, movies, on the radio, everywhere you turn, whether it's a serious comment or whether it's a joke or a combination of the both. You can't ignore it and people who didn't know what Twitter was had a least heard of Twitter and with Facebook, I think, it's become much more popular. A lot of people started with it in college. Between, probably, I don't know when it started, maybe like 2002 or something around that time, 2004, and starting with college when something that allows communication that quickly and easily and becomes that popular had no choice but to continue to expand. Just through word of mouth and family and friends and businesses. Everybody's using it. It's become a powerful tool and I'm sure there are seminars everywhere on how to successfully use social media, how to make sure that your organization is well represented out there, if you're applying for a job what to post, what not to post and things like that. It's just everywhere, whether you like it or not.

**Allison: How has your organization embraced social media and what do you see your organization doing in respect to social media in the future?**

Allen: We've definitely embraced it. Even though we do have a specific individual that is designated to stay up-to-date on those things, just about every department is still involved one way or the other. Whether from the community relations side where I have to make sure that the news and work that we're doing is represented on there as well. Even though I might not be in there typing it, I might be checking in with that individual or sending them a link or uploading photos, things of that nature. The same obviously with downstairs in the ticket office to our public relations department. They want to update and make sure that well, our PR department might not be the ones that are posting it, so just making sure that what's going up there is what we think we should be having exposed to everybody outside the building. But in this day in age, we definitely embraced it and we haven't shied away from it and trying to use it to the best of our advantage. And what was the second part of that question?

**Allison: How do you think that you'll use it in the future?**

Allen: How do I think we'll use it in the future? I think we'll definitely continue at the pace that we're at. You mentioned blogging. I don't know if blogging is something that we as an organization will participate in. One reason being that with Twitter and Facebook becoming so popular, it can almost serve that purpose, but quicker and a little but faster. But, we also don't have, Scott Smith is our website content manager, but his Tweets, if you will, serve as a personal blog. He is more or less our only personality and we just don't have personalities that you wouldn't click on. Go to our website and see Allen's blog. That's just not something that we do as an organization. So, I think moving forward we will continue to see what the growing trends are in the society. Just like five years ago, the thought of us having Facebook and Twitter accounts were probably nonexistent and it could continue to change, as it probably will moving forward. So, just try and stay as up-to-date as possible and see where society takes us.

## Mark's Interview with Josh Hall

### **Mark Clennon: How does your company specifically use social media?**

J: We like to use it in a number of different ways, were active on both Facebook and Twitter. Specifically on Facebook we use it as a calling card for our destination, we're out here trying to promote St. Pete Clearwater to would-be visitors. We use photo galleries, videos and also [use Facebook] to update with daily happenings.

On Twitter we like to use it as a visitor guide edition. We do hourly updates on things that are happening and events, positive media coverage – that sort of thing that someone that's in the destination might be interested to know.

### **M: How do you measure the effectiveness of social media?**

J: We're certainly not one of these people who are enamored by friends or followers, we really look more into interactions. We'd like to see what topics people comment on our Facebook page – and on Twitter, what gets retweeted the most.

### **M: Whose responsibility is it for social media on your organization?**

J: We sort of have a group tactic. I'm probably the lead but my boss also – I consult him a lot, especially on Facebook stuff, but primarily it would be myself.

### **M: What are the key components make a successful social media campaign?**

J: I think being conversational, definitely straying away from sales pitch constantly, I think you need to be relevant and put info out that people are interested in.

### **M: What do the executives think about social media? How do they feel about it?**

J: They've been all for it, we've had a great response from some of the higher representatives in the county – and it's certainly been another addition for us to promote the destination

### **M: For yourself and other people that use social media [Visit St. Pete Clearwater], how did you guys learn about it initially?**

J: Myself, I learned by just from being in college a couple years ago. I think I joined Facebook in probably 2002, so I've had a long, long history with Facebook. Just coming aboard VSPC in February, they decided to ramp up their social media campaign and they brought me aboard and we've had a great job in doing so

**M: What do you see your organization doing with social media in the future? Do you see it evolving? Is it a fad?**

J: I don't think it's a fad, I think we're definitely going to continue to use it, expand and really just stay on the track that we're doing. Whereas with Twitter, like I was saying, we would like to put it out there for people that are in the destination in Facebook it's a great opportunity for people who've been here before or plan to go in the future – and just to sort of swap stories about what was a great place to go.

**M: Right now, Facebook is big, Twitter is big, what do you think the next big social media website will be?**

J: That's a good question. I don't think anyone expected Twitter to do this a few years ago so I think we're all just waiting to see what's going to be next.