

19 for '19

19 recommendations for great communications in 2019

The PRCA recently reached out to several industry leaders, asking for their top PR and communications predictions for 2019. We've gathered together the top takeaways from those responses, and present you with the PRCA's 19 PRedictions for 2019.

1. **It's a freelancers' world:** With over two million workers across the UK now choosing to work freelance, people are starting to sit up and recognise freelancing as a truly valuable practice. Could 2019 be the year the government aims to address the rights and treatment of freelance and gig workers, and independent professionals gain greater powers to market their services, protect their rights, and connect with their peers.
2. **Viva la virtual networks:** As freelancing grows, so do virtual networks. Improved technology and slicker video comms means 2019 will be the year marketing and PR embrace hybrid location models, moving out of London and shifting towards flexible working.
3. **Vertical video:** There are plenty of practical challenges for brands when it comes to video, but if you're creating social video content in 2019 and it isn't optimised for vertical viewing, then ask yourself why you are ignoring that free extra real estate.
4. **Podcasts will prevail:** Between its growth in listenership numbers and its increased adoption as a business marketing platform, It seems nothing can stop podcasting's progression, and brands can no longer ignore it as a mainstream media channel.
5. **The rise of LinkedIn:** When was the last time you updated your LinkedIn profile? Our experts predict that LinkedIn will be bigger than ever this year, and how you promote your organisation on LinkedIn will become integral to business success in 2019.
6. **Return of earned media:** The continued growing public distrust in social media companies as sources of 'real' news could see brands returning to more traditional earned media formats, such as newspapers.
7. **Advanced audience understanding:** With a growing understanding of data analytics, advances in social tracking, and PR and comms professionals' networking skills, we've never had it so good when it comes to understanding our audience.
8. **Digital marketing will mature:** As digital maturity (and in turn, a digital-first skillset) moves up the agenda for communications teams, our experts predict 2019 will see a shift to companies becoming smarter and more sophisticated with their digital communications, across all online channels.
9. **Data driven measurement:** The need to measure and quantify PR has, and will remain, an issue at the forefront of many organisations. 2019 will see more focus on the growing marketing trend for using data science techniques to better analyse how effective our PR activities are, and therefore better compare our efforts to the rest of the marketing mix.
10. **PR and AI — a match made in heaven?** Artificial Intelligence has already begun to impact working life, from basic email spam filtering to machine learning a growing number of tasks. Professionals will continue to adopt and integrate this technology into their routines in 2019, whilst developing 'soft skills' to work alongside AI.

- 11. Creative collaboration:** With technology allowing greater collaboration and co-creation, the creative practitioner will become more of a creative curator and custodian, harvesting creative works and utilising data and analytics to practice creative listening and uncover new insights others are missing.
- 12. Importance of integrated campaigns:** One of the challenges the industry will face this year is to focus on outcomes rather than outputs. The differentiator when it comes to showing value is the ability to demonstrate the influence of outcomes against core business performance and objectives, which is much easier to do when aligned with larger, integrated campaigns.
- 13. Messaging poised for business integration:** With messaging services now more popular than sharing on social networks, you can expect further attempts by the networks to monetise messaging more effectively, and brands to build messaging directly into their existing business workflows.
- 14. A new era of professionals:** Our experts recognised that in order for PR to truly excel in 2019, we're going to need to do all we can to help industry's most forward-thinking talent step forward. A priority in 2019 must be to encourage young people to consider PR and communications as a career and to increase the diversity of those who take up this path.
- 15. Communicating non-verbally:** As the industry welcomes a new era of practitioners, it's important to look inwards, and focus just as much on our networking skills. This includes body language, and the impact of quiet, non-verbal communication, and the impression your ambassadors and spokespeople are making.
- 16. 'Proper' PR will prosper:** This year will see PR as a medium finally elevated to 2019 standards, through the combination of classic skills - storytelling and media relations - and innovative insight-led content marketing, with actionable KPIs attached that move the dial forward for clients.
- 17. Social value is essential:** From PR apprenticeships to working with social enterprises in your supply chain, PR and communications can have an increasingly positive impact on society. It is the responsibility of all practitioners in 2019 to understand the social impact of PR and be aware of the actions they are taking.
- 18. Focus on mental fitness:** Our experts predict that this is the year conversations around mental wellness and wellbeing will progress into real and widespread positive change. As awareness and understanding of mental health continue to rise, 'mental fitness' will become the new buzzwords for employee wellbeing.
- 19. PR will prove its worth:** Many experts believe that 2019 would be a very positive year for **PR**. By showcasing what we can achieve, and how we can be a force for good, this can, and should, be the year that we express confidence in what we do, and speak loudly and proudly about our work.

Professionals predict 2019 will see increased flexibility, collaboration, ingenuity, and creativity; a year that ushers in new talent, whilst expanding further on existing skillsets and knowledge. In short, the future is bright for PR and communications.