

PR strategies for multiple countries, platforms

By [Vivian Warby](#)

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WORLD PR FESTIVAL: Imagine a society dedicated to the childhood game of Rock Paper Scissors receiving hours of airtime on television stations across the globe, including BBC and CNN. Coverage in hundreds of publications in different languages across the globe. And an Internet search on it that yields over 1000 posts.

Well, this is what two Canadian brothers managed to achieve with their side-line tongue-in-cheek society and with very little money going toward publicising it.

If they could achieve that with a childhood game, what then could PR agencies do with a real product?

Colleen Pizarev, vice president of International Distribution for PR Newswire, posed this question to delegates at the fourth annual World Public Relations Festival – Communication for Sustainability - in Cape Town yesterday, Tuesday, 15 May 2007. The two-day conference was hosted by the Public Relations Institute of South Africa (PRISA) and the Global Alliance.

Pizarev used the Walker brothers as one of her case studies when delivering an address on new and innovative strategies to get your word out in multiple countries and across multiple platforms.

When the Walker brothers were growing up, their mother used to insist they use Rock Paper Scissors to settle arguments instead of getting physical with each other. One night, many years later, after a few drinks and when again Rock Paper Scissors came to the rescue in an argument, the brothers started to think what fun it would be to have a Rock Paper Scissors (RPS) Society. And so started the World RPS Society.

Today, there is even a RPS international championship which, incidentally, received one hour coverage on Fox Sport Net and had people queuing up to take part in it.

Create a buzz

But how did the brothers create such a buzz around their “for-kicks” society? It started with a word-of-mouth campaign. The society started to receive some local media coverage. Well, thought the Walker brothers, this looks good, let's see how far we can push this and so they started to organise a world tournament and they used the Internet to draw people to the championship.

They decided to extend outside the Canadian borders and got databases in America and Europe to target, they developed

a viral video which they posted on well-known sites like You Tube, they optimised their webpages to support pitches to blogs and they focused on online bloggers to get the word out.

This caught the eyes of many journalists and before they knew what was happening they were being interviewed across the globe (even on Oprah), they were on several talk shows, and they even developed a RPS corporate events company where you could take your company on a day of bonding and playing RPS.

Then in 2006, the brothers realised there was even more that they could do. They started to experiment with social media. They typed in the words 'How to beat anyone at Rock Paper Scissors' on a search and didn't get one site. So they made a single post like that on the net. Today when you type in those words there are over 1000 posts on the subject. The brothers had wanted to increase visitors to their website, and they were so successful that, in fact, the website crashed!

Many new tools available

"It goes to show what can be done," said Pizarev. "When creating successful and sustainable PR strategies there are so many new tools available. Today the size and location of your business is not as important to the success as it was two or three years ago.

"There are so many creative solutions ... use the Internet to your advantage," she urged.

"Take the chance that the Walker brothers took. Look at how viral marketing worked for them," said Pizarev.

Explaining viral marketing, Pizarev said: "You produce a video and then post it on a site like You Tube or a number of other sites that have this facility. It can be picked up and placed elsewhere and before you know it is has spread like a virus. It can be a phenomenon." However, she warned, once it is out there, it is out of your control.

Viral marketing was just one of the things you could try on your own. "If you are willing to try something new and have someone at the top of your company willing to give you the time to pull it off, a lot can be done."

On blogging and citizen journalists, Pizarev said you should be proactive. There are many journalists who have blogs: find out which are suited to your needs, find out how legitimate the blogs are and then ask the journalist how to get on their blog. "Every time you meet a journalist ask if they have a blog and if so, how to get on it." There can be damaging and conflicting information on blogs, which is why it is important to be proactive here.

ABOUT VIVIAN WARBY

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