Beauty Brand Versus New Media: How Have Communications Tactics Changed within a Large Cosmetic Brand & How Have they Incorporated New Media PR Tactics

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Beauty Brand Versus New Media:
How have communications tactics changed within a large cosmetic brand & how have they incorporated new media PR tactics

RUTH WALSH
BEAUTY BRAND VERSUS NEW MEDIA: HOW HAVE COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS CHANGED WITHIN A LARGE COSMETIC BRAND & HOW HAVE THEY INCORPORATED NEW MEDIA PR TACTICS

By
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MA in Public Relations with New Media

Cork Institute of Technology
Supervisor: Emmett Coffey

September 2017
Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Master's Degree (MA) in Public Relations with New Media is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge, breach any law of copyright and has not been taken from the work of others.

Signed.............................................. Date......................................................
Abstract

This research study aims to investigate and analyse what is working in the cosmetic PR industry for beauty brands; bloggers; and beauty consumers. There has been limited research conducted into this important topic and less so into the PR tactics used by large cosmetic brands. This thesis first examines that said limited scope of literature that relates to the cosmetic PR industry but not well and it further examines the viewpoints of well-known PR professionals. From this research, a triangulation approach to data collecting was outlined and conducted that included two interviews with beauty industry experts: a PR professional, a large scale Irish blogger with over 60 thousand followers; and a survey that was targeted at social media beauty consumers. The results indicate that traditional media is still a valued PR tactic that is as important to both brand and consumer even as new media or social media seems to have taken over. The results also highlighted that beauty consumers primarily use Youtube when researching new beauty products and over 70% of those participants do not believe that larger scale beauty bloggers are reliable for product reviews.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all of my lecturers that taught me during the MA in Public Relations with New Media. Their industry skills and skills of teaching have made the process interesting and exciting. A special thank you to Emmett Coffey for his continued support and guidance, his invaluable, positive feedback and constructive critique throughout my studies in the course. Thank you to Frank O’Donovan for a very enjoyable year of rich learnings in writing and public speaking, coaching and for sparking a love for shorter sentences.

Thank you to my family and friends for the level of support and encouragement you provided on a daily bases. And, for your belief in me.

To all the amazing, lifelong friends that I made during the course, thanking you all for your support and laughter that really, kept us all going.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This chapter will provide a thesis outline, communicating both the structure and purpose of this study. Clear objectives have been set out by the researcher with the hopes that the findings will sufficiently satisfy those objectives when the study is completed. It is the researchers aim to obtain a fluidity within this research study document, in that the findings will draw upon the themes from the literature reviewed. The relevance of this research question to Public Relations (PR) is addressed with a comprehensive overview of the communication tactics employed within the cosmetic industry. A summary of what is addressed throughout this document has also been provided, in this chapter.

1.2 Research Question

*Beauty Brands Versus New Media: How have communications tactics changed within a large cosmetic brand and how have they incorporated new media PR tactics.*

1.3 Methodology Overview

This thesis incorporates both primary and secondary research approaches. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies will be employed during this primary research phase. Analysis and findings will be supported by the triangulation of data collection methods. These data collection methods will consist of semi-structured interviews. One will be with PR experts from a large cosmetic company and the other will be with a smaller scale, Irish blogger. A survey will also be circulated online to a sample of 74 beauty consumers. The opinions of both the beauty PR expert and the beauty consumer will be captured effectively to provide an adequate analysis of the research question.

1.4 Purpose of This Research

The purpose of this research study is to investigate PR in the beauty industry from three perspectives; the PR expert, a blogger and the beauty consumer. It is hoped that through this investigation, the researcher will discover how communications tactics have changed within large cosmetic brands and how those brands have incorporated new media [social media] tactics to their PR agenda. The study will then move onto a bloggers’ opinion and experience with dealing with large cosmetic brands and how those brands manage the blogger/influencer relationship. And lastly, the study will analyse, through a survey, what beauty brands are most present across new media [social media] channels; what bloggers are most credible and believable when talking through press packages sent to them by beauty brands and what new media channel they would chose to watch beauty reviews on over every other.

1.5 Relevance to Public Relations

The PR topics discussed within this research study can be categorised as; cosmetic industry PR tactics and blogger collaboration. Cosmetic industry PR tactics, in today’s world, mainly relies on social media as a digital avenue to communicate new product launches and product reviews. This principle tactic is threefold more important than traditional media tactics as new media [social media] is where the majority of beauty consumers are. Blogger collaboration is equally as important to PR in the beauty industry as the products themselves.
One of the main roles for a PR executive in the cosmetic industry is to create; manage; and maintain a healthy relationship with bloggers. Having a good blogger/ influencer contacts list is a very important part of the job and the industry.

1.6 Objectives

Objective one: To identify how relevant traditional media is in 2017 cosmetic PR and what the most effective tactic is for the beauty industry.

Objective two: To identify what the most effective new media platform is for learning about new beauty products.

Objective three: To determine how important it is for a beauty brand to have a good relationship with bloggers and how effective they are at selling products.

Objective four: To identify what the beauty consumer believes to be credible blogging behaviour thus identifying a new channel of communication for the PR expert in the beauty industry.

Objective five: To analyse what PR tactics are most effective for beauty brands and why they are so effective.

1.7 Research Structure & Document Outline

Chapter Two
Literature Review: This chapter provides an analysis of existing literature that addresses types of effective PR tactics and how they have changed; the importance of PR in promoting cosmetic brands; how introducing and including social media in a promotional PR campaign can change consumer behaviour in the cosmetic industry; how MPR is an integral part of communicating cosmetic products; and why large brands have moved away from traditional, mass-media advertising to smaller scale promotional tactics.

Chapter Three
Research Methodology: This chapter sets out the research structure and methodologies employed by the researcher for this study. It sets out to analyse both primary and secondary research methodologies; ethical implications; and advantages and disadvantages to the chosen methods.

Chapter Four
Findings and Analysis: The researcher hopes to reflect the themes presented in the literature review in this chapter by analysing the primary research collected.

Chapter Five
Conclusions and Recommendations: The researcher will assess the research study and provide a concluding statement as well as comprehensive recommendations for further study for PR in the cosmetic industry.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an in-depth insight into the research topic by using published, academic materials and other research findings. There have been many theories published and proposed that explain why traditional media tactics; marketing public relations (MPR); models of communication; the management of relationships and stakeholder engagement and collaboration are vital factors in understanding why large organisations, in respect to the cosmetic industry, have moved away from traditional mass media advertising to smaller scale promotional tactics and why they have done so. This study will focus on literature that: addresses types of effective PR tactics and how they have changed; the importance of PR in promoting cosmetic brands; how introducing and including social media in a promotional PR campaign can change consumer behaviour in the cosmetic industry; how MPR is an integral part of communicating cosmetic products; and why large brands have moved away from traditional, mass-media advertising to smaller scale promotional tactics.

Throughout this chapter; the researcher reviews various relevant literature on topics that are both dated and recent. But, due to the modern theme of this study, it is important to note that the literature that is reviewed touches on outdated research and views. The researcher saw a lack of specific insights in regards to the research question and therefore- this study aims to provide an up to date scope of the beauty industry and how it uses PR to promote products.

2.2 Traditional Media PR tactics

Traditional media has limited channels of distribution. Television, radio, magazines, newspapers, brochures and advertisements are the typical channels we most often associate with traditional media. Unlike traditional media, which can be categorized as a monologue (one-to-many), social media are co-created (many-to-many) (itrainingexpert.com, 2011).

For the first time in history, organisations and public relations departments have an opportunity to listen to their publics without having to worry about sorting through comment cards or wondering how many people had an idea without expressing it because it was too much work to do so. The two-way format of social media allows organisations to listen, think, and respond more quickly and effectively than they have been able to in the past (itrainingexpert.com, 2011).

Yeshi (2012) suggests that PR provides the “vehicle for adapting a global message to achieve local impact, assisting the process of ensuring the acceptance of a global brand in markets in which cultural and other factors may inhibit the potential for growth”.

Similarly, Cain (2009) defines the PR function as the attractor of the media and the sender of messages, both functions used to promote the client and influence buyer decisions. This is where we see PR as the manager of stakeholders, the communication channel for brands and the function that communicates an influential message that “seeps into” the client or consumers mind (Ries and Ries, 2014). Traditional media PR tactics have changed, drastically, in the last 10 years. Porter and Sallot (2001) reported that almost one third of journalist’s preferred to receive news releases via e-mail rather than through ordinary mail.

It can be argued that traditional media PR tactics are now used in niche industries like small, local media companies. The innovative nature of new media or new media PR tactics such as
the use of the internet and social media have proved to outweigh traditional media PR tactics by timeliness; effectiveness and ease of access to larger publics/audiences.

2.3 Marketing Public Relations

Tench and Yeomans (2009) outline how the relationship between PR and marketing can be a fractious one. For many marketing people, PR is all about free ‘publicity’ when in fact, it can be argued that without PR tactics, marketing lacks transparency of messages communicated and can be slotted into Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) two-way asymmetric model of PR.

Marketing Public Relations (MPR) is relevant as we see a shift in activity for cosmetic brands as they move away from traditional; mass media advertising and traditional media PR tactics to using social media; and user generated content (UGC) as a tool to engage with publics to increase their bottom line. Hart (1995) says that MPR is any form of communication that contributes to the conversion of a non-customer to a customer, and subsequently to the retention of such custom. Giannini (2009) adds to the concept of MPR by stating that it is simply the employment of PR techniques and tactics to achieve marketing objectives. L'Etang (2009) believes that the MPR effort is a cost effective method in building the credibility of the brand in the eye of the consumer, through third-party endorsement. Swann (2010) notes that this use of intermediaries and endorsers to represent brand values and product image has become hugely effective. This use of third party endorsers is proven to elevate the brand to a higher social status, which, inevitably, influences the consumer. Tench and Yeomans (2009) outline how effective this process is: “it is believed that when an endorser is used in an advert, the indirect information inferred by the consumer becomes more credible and more relevant”, “the result is that the consumer has the perception of a higher quality for the advertised product.

Satawedin (2005) believes that PR is not only managed by the internal influence but the marketing perspective and consumer-orientation also powers PR execution. “Many companies are employing MPR which can lead the organisation to outstanding achievements” (Satawedin, 2005).

2.4 Models of Communication

Although dated, Grunig and Hunt’s proposed models of PR in 1984 are still referred to and are the backbone to many aspects of PR. Both Grunig and Hunt published the Four Models of Public Relations in their book Managing Public Relations (1984). The model gives an in-depth description of four different types of communication that usually takes place between an organisation and its stakeholders.

The first model is the publicity/press agentry model; the second is the PR information model; the third is the two-way asymmetric model; and the fourth one is the two-way symmetrical model which was suggest by Grunig and Hunt to be the best model of communication.

This research topic will focus on the two-way asymmetric model and the two-way symmetrical model. Understanding why cosmetic companies curate the messages and campaigns they do and what forms of communication they choose is integral to understanding how effective the tactics they employ and the messages they send out are. *See table 1.1 in Appendix A

9
The excellence theory proposed by James Grunig (1985) outlines how PR makes organisations more effective. The theory was commissioned by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and focused on interviews and surveys with professionals and CEO's globally across the United Kingdom; Canada; and the United States.

The theory explained that the value of public relations lies in organization-public relations. Good relationship with its strategic publics is helpful for an organization to develop and achieve goals desired by both the organization and its publics, reduce costs of negative publicity, and increase revenue by providing products and services needed by stakeholders (Zerfass, Ruler and Sriramesh, 2008).

The excellence theory is relevant to this study as the findings from it are a benchmark for how PR professionals strategically target their publics and better communicate with them. Through the Excellence Theory, Grunig provides PR practitioners with the concept of environmental scanning, which is a way professionals can gather information from its publics in an effort to better serve them, communicate with them, and represent them as a member of the dominant coalition of an organization (Environmental Scanning Tools / Scenario Building, 2013).

The question answered by the excellence study was that excellent communication does affect an organization's bottom line by practicing two-way communication tactics (Dozier, Grunig and Grunig, 1995).

2.5 Relationship Management

Tench and Yeomans (2009) argue that the sole purpose of PR activity is to maintain and improve the relationships between an organisation and its publics. This means that strategies and tactics should always be assessed in terms of their effect on that relationship. "It is this focus on relationships between an organisation and its publics that broadens the perspectives used to formulate PR strategies and tactics" (Tench and Yeomans, 2009).

Before the digital era engaging with publics may have been a difficult task for organisations. But in today's world; an organisation has no excuse for not talking to its publics. When we look at Grunig and Hunt's two-way symmetrical model of communication, we can see that, globally, it is seen as a form of best practice PR to communicate; reply; engage with publics for the health of any business.

Dozier, Grunig and Grunig (2013) proved, through the excellence study, that the most-excellent organisations showed above-average effectiveness in changing relationships with each of the seven publics they were asked to measure when conducting a relationship communication project. "Communicators are smart enough to set program objectives that affect relationships and reduce conflict. They are smart enough to collect evidence of observable communication effects through linkages between communication excellence and overall organizational effectiveness" (Dozier, Grunig and Grunig, 2013).

Ledingham and Bruning (1998), through extensive qualitative research around the topic of relationship management in public relations, found that their survey showed "that the relationship dimensions of trust, openness, involvement, commitment and investment in an organization-public relationship differentiated stayers, leavers, and undecided subscribers in
an emerging competitive environment”. The results also found that overall, the results of their research suggested a significant role for public relations within the broader scope of corporate strategic planning (Ledingham and Bruning, 1998).

2.6 Stakeholder Engagement and Social Influencer Collaboration

Stakeholders are an integral part of this study as they will provide the analysis of the messages communicated through PR tactics by cosmetic brands. Johnson & Scholes (2002) define stakeholders as those who have a stake or interest in a particular organisation by means of they might depend on the organisation to fulfil their own goals and on whom, in turn, the organisation depends. Stakeholder engagement can be defined as the proactive integration of feedback from those impacted by an organisation and its operations. It can be seen as a way of building trust between an organisation and all of its publics (stakeholders). Continuous work on engaging stakeholders results in improving an organisation’s bottom line; and an, obvious, improvement in the relationship between an organisation and its stakeholders which inevitably improves the health of the organisation.

Tench and Yeomans (2009) outline that stakeholders should be considered at the first stage of strategic management; in environmental scanning and situation analysis to identify the consequences of the organisation’s behaviour on the stakeholders and vice versa, to anticipate any possible issues and problems. In a guide by The Healthy Business Coalition (healthybusiness.bsr.org, n.d.) the reasons why stakeholder engagement are critical for healthy business are outlined.

*See table 1.2 in Appendix A

This guide further cements the fact that interacting and supporting stakeholders is highly beneficial for any business.

2.7 Who is a Social Influencer?

According to Freberg et al. (2011) a social influencer is a type of third-party endorser who shapes audiences’ attitudes. These influencers reach high levels of popularity through their participation and content on social networking sites. They achieve fame through online media, such as blogs and online videos on social media channels like Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram. Influencers or bloggers gain followers through the content that they create themselves which allows their followers to, essentially, follow their personal lives and narratives. This new type of celebrity is seen as a more ‘organic’ person that has the media’s attention as many and most of them lead normal lives which in turn makes them easier to relate to for everyday people that watch their content.

These influencers or bloggers make money from advertising brands through their social media channels. They monetize their content through highly personalised, opinion-laden promotions of products and services that they, usually, experience for a fee (“Micro-microcelebrity”, 2015). Freberg et al. (2011) looked at and identified specific characteristics that influencers have and what appealed to participants. The participants revealed that verbal, smart, ambitious,
productive, and poised were the most positive attributes for influencers and the brand they were promoting. The influencer opinion seems to resonate with consumers, and in social media posts they frequently enjoy giving advice and recommendations, this can also be called ‘microblogging’. Bloggers and influencers use the power of their following on social media to reach a wide audience to start conversations for brands. “Bloggers consider blogging a personal medium for self-expression, community connection and sharing opinions” (Smith, 2010). Influencers who maintain this strong identity and transparency to their community are seen as relatable and credible which allows them to become important channels of communication for consumers looking for recommendations on products.

When brands are selecting influencers to use for particular promotional tactics they must consider a range of factors. These factors include their popularity, their industry, number of followers they have and how liked they are. Chatterjee (2011) describes these determining factors “the visible display of members of one’s social network at SNSs (social networking sites) plays a signaling role in enhancing a recipient’s’ decision to comply with an influencer’s new product recommendation”.

For an influencer to be scouted by a brand, they must post frequently, have high engagement rates with their followers and successful referral rates. Finding an influencer or blogger that suits a brand’s identity or product is invaluable to the success it can bring to the brand and overall campaign.

2.8 PR versus Advertising: Are They really dissimilar

Public relations (PR) does not offer a direct service to the public in the way that many other occupations do (Goldsworthy, 2008). PR is more focused on “changing attitudes” (Belch and Belch, 2004) and letting an influential message “seep into” (Ries and Ries, 2014) the consumer or selected public’s mind.

It is an integral part of a business to offer a PR service either for the business’ own benefit or to offer it as a service. Ries and Ries (2014) argue that “You don’t hammer an idea into a mind, you let it seep in”. The best way to accomplish that is through public relations. People absorb more information from earned media than they do from paid media.

“It is now difficult to launch a product through consumer advertising because customers don’t really pay attention as they did in the past, nor do they believe the message. I look at the money spent on advertising and it surprises me that people still believe they are getting returns on their investments.” The fall of advertising Al Ries quote.

With PR and advertising being two of the most popular and main functions of communication that companies adopt when they are trying to convey messages and tell stories in relation to products or services, both functions need to work together to create the best image and turn that positive perception into money. It is thought that PR is more credible than advertising. Grunig (1992) states that building good relationships with strategic publics will need public relations practitioners to be strategic communication managers rather than communication technicians whereas Bovee & Arens (1992) argue that advertising is a non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identifying sponsors through various media.
PR poses a more credible function because there is more thought and strategic planning put into how the story or narrative of a company or brand is perceived. Advertising is solely focused on creating an eye-catching adaptation of a brand that hopes to sell the product. Jo (2004) found that advertising had more impact on consumers than editorial PR but also discovered that the message was more important to consumers rather than the medium. This study also looked at the impact those messages had on their audiences. Finding that editorial PR messages have more of an effect on consumers when there is a strong argument attached while advertising is more impactful when a weak argument is launched (Jo, 2004).

2.9 Using Social Media as part of a PR campaign

As social media continues to rise and the shift to a fast-paced digitalised world becomes a reality, PR professional now have to keep up with consumer conversations online. For brands to have a [loud] voice during this techy-time they have turned to social media channels and social media influencers and bloggers. Gillin (2008), in a communications professional’s survey, found that 57% said that social media tools are becoming more valuable to their day-to-day activities. Blogs and online videos showed up as the top three tools that their company used in recent campaigns. Within this new integration of social media channels, there is a large space from brands to join in the conversation.

At the heart of every brand is the consumer. Their opinions and attitudes are what makes or breaks the brands overall health. Social media allows for brands to directly engage in consumer conversations that help build healthy relationships with consumers and encourage brand loyalty (Booth and Matic, 2011). The idea for a brand to use a social media influencer or blogger is so that they can influence a conversation by means of a brand advocate. Influencers who partake is promotional campaigns allow the brand they are promoting to have a direct voice in the conversation by reaching their target audience through their trusted consumer peers.

For brands to survive in this fast-paced digital world they must integrate social media aspects into their campaigns. Using social media influencers and bloggers are a PR tactic in a larger brand strategy, social media campaign. Booth and Matic (2011) believe that brand strategy is the foundation of the communication that builds authentic relationships. Chatterjee (2011) believes that understanding where your chosen social influencer fits into a brand’s campaign is pivotal for success. “Social influencers have the ability to reinforce brand strategy online by providing information that mitigates perceived risk and induce recipients to engage with the brand sponsor” (Chatterjee, 2011).

2.10 Types of PR tactics used by cosmetic brands

The cosmetic industry is so vast, spanning across many consumer cultures. There are seven total parent brands that control 182 beauty and cosmetic brands *See table 1.3 in Appendix A. The different levels of superiority of cosmetic brands help us to decipher the world leaders in the industry. The type of PR used by these higher tier brands is controlled by two of the parent companies mentioned above, Estée Lauder and L’Oréal. Both of these parent companies have a large number of cosmetic brands under their umbrella and have headquarters across the U.S.A; the U.K; and Ireland. Most of the important and final PR campaign decisions are made in the U.S.A and U.K based offices but, depending on clientele, these campaigns and messages are usually altered and marketed to the audience in the Ireland offices.
Fernandez (2017) discussed the growth in both Estée Lauder and L'Oréal’s market share in her article written for the Business Of Fashion. She captured what the beauty market is worth in the U.S.A: $62 billion and that prestige beauty brands (owned by parent companies Estée Lauder and L'Oréal) outperforming mass beauty brands. In relation to analysing L'Oréal, the Luxe division of the company is the fastest growing division. It expanded 5.6 percent in the first half of 2016, while Estée Lauder’s adjusted sales grew 9 percent in the year ending June 30 (Fernandez, 2017). Both companies have the same goal to be number one in the beauty industry. In today’s world, getting to that goal means getting the right message out there to connect with consumers thus increasing the need for consumers to engage with the brand.

Social Trends

One of the most important factors in cosmetic industry PR is following social trends. These trends are where the consumer’s eyes are. Knowing what’s going on and adapting it to certain brands helps those brands create new messages for consumers which can push profit creation. Lennard (2017) states that consumers are constantly searching for new products and to keep up with this demand, cosmetic companies need to regularly introduce new products to this market demand.

Traditional Media Tactics

Shen and Bissell (2013) outline how traditional media are utilized by a small amount of social entities (an individual or an organization) to deliver information and messages to media consumers, such as TV programs, newspapers, magazines, or paper-based publications, which exemplify a one-way communication model. Magazines, as one of the most important traditional media PR tactics for the cosmetic industry, have huge beauty coverage. Although these adverts cost a lot of money, they are considered ‘return on investment’ as they capture a certain demographic and communicate a message to that demographic through this PR medium.

Celebrity Endorsement / Influencer

Pitman (2011) discusses how celebrities are used by cosmetic companies as a promotional tool as it gives their brand a lot of exposure. This exposure is due to the celebrities following across a host of different channels like social media and traditional media. While there is the question that some celebrities that are paid to promote certain products do not actually use the products, consumers believe these products will make them look as attractive as the person promoting the product.

When it comes to influencers, it is the same principal as celebrity endorsement. An influencer with a large following on social media has a huge effect or influence on their followers. People trust the influencers they follow and therefore using an influencer as a PR tactic is proven to be very effective in communicating a PR message for a beauty brand.
Social Media Tactics

Social media is used by cosmetic brands to connect with their customers. The communicative model embedded in social media has evolved to a two-way experience (Shen and Bissell, 2013). Based on the theories in social presence, media richness, self-presentation, and self-disclosure (Shen and Bissell, 2013), Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified social media into six different categories: collaborative projects, blogs and microblogs, content communities or user generated content, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Shen and Bissell, 2013).

It is social networking sites that play an important role in building strong brands. The number one online activity is social networking with Facebook being the main site used (Qualman, 2011).

All of the parent companies *See table 1.3 in Appendix A use social media as a PR tactic. With each one gaining a competitive edge due to using influencer’ channels to communicate with their audience.

2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted a relevant review of the existing literature surrounding the research topic. The review has revealed a number of frameworks to which a research methodology can be undertaken.

Firstly, a discussion around traditional media PR tactics and how new media PR tactics have outweighed the traditional methods of communicating messages to consumers. An in-depth analysis of the marketing public relations (MPR) function has provided the bones of this research study as it is the shift away from traditional mass media PR tactics to new media or social media PR tactics is the area of investigation for this study. A brief analysis of Grunig & Hunts models of communication were essential in defining what PR messages should be communicated and what ones work, and do not work. These models are a reference point for many and most PR research. The literature reviewed around relationship management proved to further solidify why relationship management as a PR function is necessary for all types of PR activity: maintaining and improving the relationships between an organisation and its publics is one of the main theories in PR strategy. The next sections of the literature were that of new ideas. The fact that they are new ideas and PR concepts, it made it more challenging to research literature about the topics. Reviewing the literature for Stakeholder Engagement & Blogger Collaboration, Who is a Social Influencer, Using Social Media as part of a PR Campaign and Types of PR Tactics Used by Cosmetic Brands provided an important insight into where further needs to be investigated.

The ideas found within this literature review will form the basis for the primary research phase through interviews and surveys. The researcher will then link the findings of the primary research to the literature review to uncover common themes. The researcher hopes that the themes discovered through the research phase will satisfy the research objectives as discussed in chapter one.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research methods conducted throughout this study are outlined. The methods of data gathering will be discussed and analysed as relevant and appropriate forms of primary research. With keeping it relevant to PR, this chapter seeks to prove how a range of qualitative research methods substantially provides rich data that contributes to findings in the Public Relations (PR) and Marketing Public Relations (MPR) sector. The aim of this chapter is to highlight how using interviews and surveys with expert sources along with consumers gives a large scope of the industry under the research question.

3.2 Research Approach & Rationale

Daymon and Halloway (2010) believe that qualitative research holds great potential for the study of public relations and marketing communications because of its ability to enable researchers to be closely involved with research participants. Both argue that it helps the researcher to better understand social processes; the motivations of human beings; and the context in which they are situated. The insight given by Daymon and Halloway is relevant to this research as it is an investigation into how the publics of a large cosmetic organisation receive PR messages sent out through various PR tactics. In order to explore this form of PR, primary research will be carried out. The findings of the primary research will then ensure a comprehensive analysis of the research question.

The first step in completing this analysis is deciding what methods of data collection are appropriate. Although both qualitative and quantitative methods can be carried out: using a mix in research methods can skew the findings. For the purpose of this study; the researcher has decided to approach the research question with a collection of both qualitative and quantitative research. After the research is collected; the researcher must then decide how they will code the data and organise it so that to facilitate a well-rounded analysis.

3.3 Research Design

Given (2008) says that most primary research study begins with a review of the relevant literature. The literature review provides the framework for where the research question slots into the big picture.

Daymon and Halloway (2010) explain how qualitative research methods gives us an insight into underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations in human behaviours without a rigid statistical framework.

The primary research in this study is mainly focused on determining the mindset of the consumer and publics. Qualitative methods will be implemented to analyze why and how communication tactics of large cosmetic organisations have shifted from mass-media advertising and PR tactics to new media PR tactics.

In doing this research, the researcher conducted desk research that looked at other theses of a similar topic. The purpose of this was to better understand how other researchers tackled this
new phenomenon of big brands employing small cottage style PR tactics to reach their target publics. Guðbjörg Cowden (2014) found that through her research of how the role of social media marketing within young, Icelandic companies affected the company’s use of traditional marketing methods. There were three main findings from this study: first, social media marketing was found to be used mostly for retention of customers, with traditional marketing being used for acquisition of customers. Second, this had a significant effect on the company’s traditional marketing campaign, mainly opting to utilize traditional PR methods to lobby for interviews and forgoing all other traditional marketing methods. Third, this research showed that young, Icelandic companies are more likely to adopt social media marketing strategies over traditional marketing strategies, due to both a lack of marketing expertise and money (Guðbjörg Cowden, 2014). These findings were identified through semi-structured interviews of a total of six companies. Initially, 23 companies were contacted through Facebook; EMail; and Twitter. The interview study was conducted and recorded then transcribed so as to be measured.

For the purpose of this research study, the researcher will contact three cosmetic industry professionals with the hope of one agreeing a semi-structured interview; contact two beauty bloggers/ influencers with the aim that one will agree to a semi-structured interview; construct an online survey and distribute to all contacts in the field and all beauty consumers in the researcher's social [media] circle.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are appropriate for this study. Surveys and interviews will be conducted to which will make the triangulation of the data more fluid. The information required for the findings of this study is based on the thoughts and opinions of consumers and experts in the cosmetic industry; and the effects certain PR tactics have on the publics of the cosmetic industry.

The researcher conducting this study is using a multi-method research approach so as to increase the chances of prime data collection. Given (2008) believes that multi-method research enhances the researcher’s grasp of the social context topic thus improving the quality of the data collected. Using this approach to collect data, inevitably, results in in-depth recorded data that provides a large depth in the research topic.

For those reasons, the researcher will use two methods of data collection- Interviews and surveys.

A qualitative method of data collection is involved in this study, section 3.5 outlines why the researcher has chosen to use qualitative methods.

3.5 Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research

The development and understanding of knowledge is important for professional PR practitioners. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods can be used; and in fact, should be used when measuring certain PR tactics. But, the difference between both, might, determine the effectiveness of PR strategies and therefore determine how to tackle a PR strategy better.
With most research, the initial type of methodology conducted is primary research. This type of research is under the qualitative umbrella and is an effective way of getting credible information at the early stages. Berg and Lune (1998) argue that quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience. “Qualitative research thus refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things” (Berg and Lune, 1998).

Daymen and Halloway (2010) consider qualitative research to be an insight into underlying reasons, opinions; and motivations in human behaviours, without a rigid statistical framework i.e. quantitative.

What’s missing from Berg and Lunes definition is the amount of “meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things”. The numerical amount of things in the definition is not the focus for qualitative research. That is the point of quantitative research

Quantitative research is a more scientific or mathematical way of undergoing and measuring research. It measures and investigates social phenomena via statistical, mathematical or numerical data or computational techniques (Given, 2008). It is not used as a research method in this study as it is considered more difficult to quantify how PR is used by cosmetic companies and how it is received by consumers.

For the purpose of this study; a qualitative research strategy was applied to collecting the relevant data. As mentioned in section 3.4, Interviews and a survey were the means for collecting the relevant data. It is important for the researcher to understand the meaning of conclusions produced by the above listed methods of collecting information.

Tewksbury (2009) summarizes the difference between the two methods of research. “Qualitative methods are about gaining true understandings of the social aspects of how crime occurs and how the agents, structures and processes of responding to crime operate in culturally-grounded contexts. Qualitative methods provide a depth of understanding of issues that is not possible through the use of quantitative, statistically-based investigations. Qualitative methods are the approach that centralizes and places primary value on complete understandings, and how people (the social aspect of our discipline) understand, experience and operate within milieus that are dynamic, and social in their foundation and structure.

3.6 Interviews

Overview

Daymen and Halloway (2010) believe that interviewing is primarily link to qualitative research, particularly in the field of PR stating that the researcher has the ability to guide the qualitative interview process by preparing focused and relevant questions and topics to discuss. Both consider this method to be a collaborative exploration into the ideas, feelings and intentions of various stakeholders or publics and of those involved in managing formal communications.

Structured interviews have a set list of questions that usually are not veered away from while unstructured interviews are free-flowing and allow for multiple topics to arise. Semi-structured interviews are conducted on the basis that the researcher or interviewer will have a
list of questions to ask but there is room for further probing through the intervening of questions that arise from responses. Given (2008) states that unstructured interviews provide the researcher with an outline of topics under discussion.

Disadvantages

Daymon and Halloway (2010) have said that interviewees may fabricate or elaborate in order to enhance their self-esteem or cover up discreditable actions. Similarly, this can be said about the interviewer. According to Walford (2007), “interviews alone are an insufficient form of data to study social life”. That is, as both interviewer and interviewee may have incomplete knowledge or even faulty memory (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Interviews can also be time-consuming and relatively hard to correlate data from. Denscombe (2007) argues that the context and impact of the interviewer can affect reliability.

Advantages

Denscombe (2007) believes that rich data can be collected from semi-structured interviews. He says that interviewers have depth of information and valuable insights and flexibility in questioning which allows the process to be stress-free and simplistic as a form of data collection. The advantages for well-structured interviews weigh out the disadvantages as when rich data is collected it can form the basis of the research question, but as Denscombe (2007) stated, it is not the most reliable form of primary research.

The researcher for this study aims to be mindful of the pitfalls discussed above with the sole intention of conducting interviews with relevant and enthusiastic people who have strong ties to the cosmetic industry. The interviewees were selected based on their interest and expertise in the field of cosmetic PR.

3.7 Surveys

Overview

As a research tool and form of data collection, surveys prove to be “extremely descriptive, analytical yet they can also test hypotheses” (Daymon and Halloway, 2010). It is easy to target a certain group of people with a survey as the questions that make up a survey are intended to highlight rich data. According to Given (2008), surveys can be created or designed in three different ways: open-ended questions; closed-ended questions or a mixture of both. Kane (1985) argues that open-ended questions allow more freedom for the person replying but are more difficult for the surveyor to process when the survey is over. When designing a survey, it is important to keep in mind that closed-ended questions are more easily quantifiable.

Surveys work best when questions are clear and concise. There are disadvantages to having questions on a survey that are too broad. It may result in data that is too difficult to measure. Kane (1985) states that surveys can only provide us with information on a closed and narrow topic arguing that “the replies, when added up, will not provide a holistic picture- they are just a set of responses to specific questions, and a snapshot at one point in time”. On the other hand, when conducting a study based on the collection of qualitative data, Given (2008) believes that surveys can be distributed online, in an easy fashion to multiple parties, without any cost for the researcher. In the current digital era of 2017; it is hugely beneficial to be able
to access and create surveys, for free, and send them to desired sources either nationally or internationally.

**Survey Design**

The art of survey research suggests that simplicity of design and graphics helps boost questionnaire completion (Dozier, Grunig and Grunig, 1995).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher decided to design a survey with closed-ended questions that can easily be measured. The survey was distributed to 40 cosmetic consumers across X counties in Ireland. This small scale research strategy targeted cosmetic consumers from the following demographics: students; industry professionals; mothers; teenage girls; and bloggers. With such a wide range of consumers, the data collected will be rich and effective in relation to the desired result.

3.8 Subject Selection

Reaching a significantly large population is near impossible due to timeframes and deadlines. For this reason; researchers rely on getting evidence from a certain portion of people, in the hopes that findings directly apply to that group (Given 2008). The sample of people selected needs to be done so meticulously, for the researcher to be confident that the data collected correctly represents the overall view of a certain category of people. Social researchers have two strands of sampling available to them; probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Robson 2011). Denscombe (2007) argues that non probability sampling is a procedure that involves selecting elements based on the researcher's judgment about which elements will facilitate his or her investigation. Probability sampling is utilised when “the researcher has some notion of the probability that those sampled will be a representative cross-section of people or events in the whole population being studied” (Denscombe 2007).

“Probability sampling methods are widely known to be objective and to negate potential criticism of subjectivity of choice of illustrative examples” (Denscombe 2007).

With it being near impossible to survey every PR professional in the cosmetic industry; and every consumer of cosmetics, a focus on distributing the survey online and inviting participants to engage was the sampling approach. This approach, for the research, eliminated bias from the unconscious action of personal selection. Sampling a small group of people, ensured that the data collected would be easily analysed. The initial survey that was distributed prompted the creation of another one to better analyse the behaviour of cosmetic consumers. After the surveys were collected; the information gathered was improved by moving on to the researchers other forms of data collection: Interviews; and focus groups. The interviewees selected hold specific and professional expertise in the industry being investigated for this study

3.9 Reliability & Validity of Triangulated Data

"By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and empirical materials, researchers can hope to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single-method, single-observer, and single-theory studies. Often the purpose of triangulation in specific contexts is to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different
perspectives. The point at which the perspectives converge is seen to represent reality” (Jakob, 2001).

Triangulation is a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several viewpoints and methods. In the social sciences, it refers to the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct, and can be employed in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies. Discussions about whether and how to combine social research methods go back to debates about the use of survey and fieldwork or the use of interviews and participant observation (Yeasmin and Ferdousour Rahman, 2012).

For this study, the researcher will be using triangulation in order to gain multiple perspectives around the research question. In analysing the reliability and validity of each form of data collection, the researcher will further solidify the methods of data collection chosen for this study.

**Literature Review**

Kane (1985) argues that society can put too much trust into literary material just because it is recorded and printed on paper. He believes that statistics included in a research study can lack validity. Thus, he believes that there are disadvantages to relying on secondary sources. Statistical categories may change from year to year and groupings can be generalised and pushed together for example: young and old; rural and urban; or males and females. Robson (2011) believes these differentiations may arguably cause inaccuracies in numbers.

**Survey**

Robson (2011) believes that the reliability and validity of survey data depend, to a considerable extent, on the technical proficiency of those running the survey. He argues that if the questions are ambiguous or incomprehensible, the respondents will not be able to complete the survey efficiently and therefore wastes time. Generalizability is a glaring issue with surveys. This happens when respondents come from outside the sample group intended which skews the data collected (Robson, 2011). Another issue that may skew the survey method of collecting data is the behaviour of the sample group. They may say they will complete the survey but their behaviour cannot be accessed through a questionnaire which threatens the validity of the data collected (Denscombe 2007). To ensure reliability of data the sample group should be presented with the same standardized and considered CEQ to obtain the maximum responses. (Robson, 2011)

**Interview**

Denscombe (2007) argues that when you are analysing the collected data from an interview, what is recorded is not likely to be a literal depiction of events. The researcher conducting the study may have to provide a summary of the data collected. “Quite rationally, the researcher will wish to put a positive spin on events and to bring out the best in the process” (Denscombe 2007). Robson (2011) believed that the researcher must take care to avoid untruths, when presenting the findings in a positive light. This evaluation is particularly true when collecting data using qualitative methods. Seidman (2013) states that when there are more parties included as part of the interview process, there is more validity in the data collected from their answers. He, also, believes that multiple interviewees place participant’s
comments in context, as well as allowing for the coding of consistencies more easily. Seidman (2013) recounts how an interviewer should behave, in order to maintain validity: “they should not interrupt, nor redirect the thought process, nor enforce their own opinion. Borg (1981) alludes to this issue with his response effect that encompasses the potential unreliability of an interview: “Eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out the answers that support his preconceived notions” (Borg 198).

3.10 Ethical Issues

Through the research methods involved in this study, there are ethical issues that may arise. It can be argued that through interviews and focus groups; the researcher has access to the participants inner most thoughts and can directly influence the data collected by framing questions. This can be problematic for the participant[s] as the researcher can have the opportunity to extract personal information and, possibly, pray on these emotions to gain preferred answers or data. Anyansi-Archibong (2015) state that there are four primary ethical issues in data collection. Firstly, the researcher's desire to write a comprehensive case and reorder or change the data collected; secondly, dealing with reality and social sciences is complex and multi-faceted and cannot be completely analysed; thirdly, how human observation can be biased and warped; and lastly, the researcher can have an [unethical] urge to deliberately or accidentally influence the data.

Before conducting any of the research methodologies, the researcher referred to the Cork Institute of Technology Code of Good Practice in Research (2005) to ensure all ethical issues were understood and avoided. This framework was integral to the researcher for this section of the study to ensure the highest ethical standards in conducting this study were met. All research should follow the same best practice approach whereby honesty, integrity, openness, accountability and fairness should be the central theme. On the same level: confidentiality, anonymity, and impartiality were considered where necessary. Clear records of the data generated are recorded and referenced.

3.11 Chapter Summary

The research that was conducted for this study was done so in a methodical manner that ensured the optimisation and legitimacy of the findings. The initial form of data collection was done so by way of a literature review. This as a secondary research method, formed the bases for the interview structure; the theme of the focus group; and the format of the survey distributed.

This triangulation of data has led to the thorough analysis of the research topic from a varied range of perspectives and sources. This three-fold triangulation resulted in consistencies across the data and the approach to collecting it. The aim of the interviews was to get the perspective from a PR professional in the cosmetic industry who has exceptional experience in creating successful PR campaigns in Ireland as well as a beauty blogger, who is on the smaller scale spectrum that was able to share information that was not biased about the industry. For the survey: the researcher aimed to target just the cosmetic industry consumer. They are cosmetic industry consumers, with a deep understanding and awareness of how cosmetic brands use certain PR tactics to connect with customers.

Ethical guidelines have been maintained throughout each method of data collection.
Chapter 4: Findings and Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will highlight patterns; themes; and differences drawn from the findings obtained from the analysis of the research topic. The objectives outlined in Chapter One of this study aimed to investigate how PR tactics have changed for large cosmetic companies.

The literature review, Chapter Two, exposed the gaps in research surrounding how and if large cosmetic brands have changed PR tactics to incorporate new media trends. The literature review further aided the researcher in identifying what other researchers found and argued in relation to this modern topic and exposed key findings that contributed to answering the research question.

Throughout the literature review many theories published were analysed that explained why the following factors: traditional media tactics, marketing public relations (MPR), models of communication, the management of relationships and stakeholder engagement and collaboration, were vital in understanding why large organisations, in respect to the cosmetic industry, have moved away from traditional mass media advertising to smaller scale promotional tactics. The literature review study focused on literature that: addressed types of effective PR tactics and how they have changed; the importance of PR in promoting cosmetic brands; how introducing and including social media in a promotional PR campaign can change consumer behaviour in the cosmetic industry; how MPR is an integral part of communicating cosmetic products; and why large brands have moved away from traditional, mass-media advertising to smaller scale promotional tactics.

However, a divide within the existing literature emerged upon completing the literature review when considering the relevance to and appropriateness of new media as a largely modern medium in the PR sector and specifically the beauty PR industry.

Although the literature reviewed was largely current, most of the theories are dated and before the digital era. With this in mind, the research has conducted two interviews with two valued sources that are working in the professional cosmetic PR sector in Ireland.

To further investigate and explore these findings thus answering the thesis question, the researcher undertook primary research which contributed to a triangulation of results. The method of the online survey consisted of a distribution of it online through Facebook. It aimed to capture both male and females between 17 and 39. The researcher undertook specific Facebook analysis prior to sending out the survey so as to best capture the target audience. For this reason; the survey was distributed on Facebook at 9:00 pm on the 7/08/2017. This proved to capture the target audience and resulted in a result of 74 participants.

This mixed methods approach of qualitative and quantitative data gathering *see chapter 3*, was intended to gather data that gives insight and reasoning to the thesis question and further study from three perspectives: The beauty consumer; the blogger; and the PR expert in a large cosmetic company.

The literature review exposed themes that influenced the primary research. The researcher aimed to further explore these themes in this chapter. The similarities between both primary
and secondary research have become an integrated and well-rounded analysis of the cosmetic PR industry.

4.2 Is traditional media still relevant in cosmetic PR & what’s the most important & effective traditional media PR tactic?

Without in-depth research done, most people would think or presume that traditional media is not that relevant to the PR industry anymore. Especially with digital and new media saturating our world. The researcher aimed to investigate how relevant traditional media is to the cosmetic industry in particular. What was found, from primary and secondary research is that traditional media is still very important to: beauty brands; bloggers and beauty consumers. Survey results reveal that 17.3% of beauty consumers found out about new beauty products from traditional media, specifically television and print (magazines) *See Appendix E, Figure 3. Interviewee B and Cooney agree that traditional media is important stating that press releases are one of the most important parts of a blogger getting sent products to share with their followers because “If all the right information is on it- I can communicate it to my followers, better” (Cooney interview) and one of the most important things the PR professional has to create.

Although the press release has evolved from a printed off and delivered concise word document to an electronic document with graphics, it is still one of the most important parts of PR, especially for beauty brands. Hickey (2008) argues that press releases are far from dead. “In fact, when developed strategically, their opportunities, appeal and benefits are only expanding in conjunction with the groups of various influencers and consumers who rely on them for relevant information”. Interviewee B agrees: they believe that press releases are integral to the agenda of beauty brands as they accompany not only the contents of a press package but also are attached to what is known as an e-blast. An e-blast, as described by Interviewee B, is an email sent out to the contact list of a beauty brand who have already received a press package in the post. This e-blast consists of a PDF version of the press release; high resolution images of the products that were sent to them in the post; and an email that inquires whether they are enjoying the products and if they are: it prompts them to put the package up on their social media. The high resolution images are sent to them in case they want to include them in a blog post or a beauty article in print media.

Interviewee B argues that press releases are one of the most important traditional media PR tactics for a beauty brand. “In our organisation, it is one of the most important things about the day to day schedule of the PR team”, “liaising with graphic designers to make sure the look and feel of the brand is communicated on the press release as well as all the relevant information”.

Cooney believes that one of the most important thing a cosmetic brand needs to consider when sending out a press package is to include a press release. “It’s important to include a press release with prices, and information on when and where the products are available. I find them so helpful when I am talking about a product I have been sent. If all the right information is on it- I can communicate it to my followers, better”.

The viewpoints and opinions from both interviewees are not mirrored by the data collected from the survey that was distributed. It collected 74 responses from Male and Female beauty consumers from the ages of 17 plus (age 17-25 was the most popular age: 55.41% of the total survey data). When asked how they found out about beauty products: only 4% said print
(magazines) and 13.8% said television. 71.62% of the data collected highlighted that the participants found out about beauty products through new and social media. *see Appendix E

4.3 Beauty brand Versus Blogger: The most important elements of the relationship

Importance of Managing the Blogger Relationship

Interviewee B believes that it is so important for brands to connect with beauty bloggers. They argue that big [cosmetic] brands have to make this relationship a priority as consumers and desired target audiences are all accessed through bloggers and influencers. Cooney echoes this expert opinion by stating that “developing a loyal, long-term relationship is important [for both beauty brand and blogger]”. She believes that this ensures the relationship is mutually beneficial and that both blogger and brand will both continue to help each other grow.

The Value of Blogger Collaboration

The purpose of the survey was to understand what makes beauty consumers buy cosmetics. The results showed that Youtube was the most popular platform for the participants to use when researching about a beauty product *see Appendix E, Figure 4. Interviewee B further solidified this result by stating that video user generated content is the most effective tactic in terms of actually influencing the consumer. And from a personal perspective, they believe that it is a very influential way to blog as you can see how the blogger tries on the product for yourself, in real time. Interviewee B outlines how important blogger collaboration is to their PR work in the cosmetic industry: “managing the relationship between the brand and bloggers is one of the most important day-to-day activities for the PR team. We are constantly updating our ‘who to watch list’ as we watch people’s social media following grow. We analyse their followers and their interaction and engagement and then approach them if they are right for the brand. When I say ‘right for the brand’ I really mean: will they influence their followers to buy the product”. Cooney agrees that this relationship is very important and stresses the fact that “consumers find bloggers words more trustworthy than advertising these days as they find them more relatable”. Interestingly, the survey found that 66.22%,*see Appendix E, Figure 8, of the participants are prompted to buy beauty products from blogger recommendations. This is an important element in this research study as all three parts of the data collected from primary research prove that blogger collaboration is one of the most important parts for selling cosmetics.

4.4 What new media patterns are beauty consumers paving?

What social media platform is used the most by beauty consumers to research beauty products

The survey result showed that the typical beauty consumer finds out about beauty products on social media platforms (71.62% social media; 17.3% traditional media). It found that digital video accounted for exactly half of the social media choices that the beauty consumer uses the most for researching beauty products. With Youtube calculating 50% of the answers, Instagram was 25.68%, Facebook 16.22% and Snapchat 8.11%. This incite highlights that the beauty consumer is largely drawn to video user generated content and images opposed to written content that is found on blogs; magazines and websites. Cooney agrees with this result but believes that Snapchat is the most important platform for telling her followers about
beauty products. "I would say probably Snapchat as it is raw and unedited. It's also videos so it gives you time to explain the product, show it, talk about it" but Snapchat got the least amount of hits in the survey by the beauty consumer.

Large Vs small scale beauty blogger: who is more credible in the eyes of the consumer?

The survey found that 74.32% of the participants did not think that larger scale beauty bloggers (over 30k followers) were reliable or credible in relation to delivery beauty reviews to their followers. But, the participants who answered yes (14.86%) stated that:

"Larger following makes them more honest & makes them actually try the product"

"They've tried a lot more products & will be able to compare brands better"

"The more popular they are the more I value their opinion"

"Success & popularity is what validates trust in beauty blogger's opinions"

"They have more experience & have used most beauty products"

"If they have a bigger following what they say is more likely to be true"

"They are more credible due to their following & brand association"

*See Appendix E, Figure 5

Cooney, as a beauty consumer, states that learning about products from beauty bloggers is very important to her as there is so much makeup out there [on the market] it's hard to know best and what to buy. "Having lots of experts on my phone talking about different products on a daily basis really helps me decide what might work for me".

Honest blogger? What does the beauty consumer think?

From the beauty consumers who took the survey for this study's perspective, 66.21% said they do not believe bloggers when talking through press packages because "they are getting paid to say it's good" (quote from survey *See Appendix E, Figure 6). This poses a problem in the cosmetic PR industry as Interviewee B believes that press packages are the only [current] way to get products to bloggers and then to the consumer. "We have a process that works really well It is used by all cosmetic companies and it really is the only [current] way to get products to bloggers and get them talking about that product. We send out a press pack to everyone on our blogger and influencer list" (Interviewee B). Cooney states that for her blog, she is always open and honest. "I am always open and honest about the fact that I am not an expert. I like learning about things, and I love finding really good essential products like foundation, lipstick, bronzer, mascara. I share my favourites with followers on my Snapchat or Instagram occasionally".

From the triangulation of this primary research there is clear areas where future research needs to be done. The researcher will address this issue in Chapter 5 where recommendations for further research will be outlined.
Chapter 5: Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research study is to capture and analyse what is working in the cosmetic PR industry in Ireland and further: what tactics are successful and what ones are not. This chapter will provide a synopsis of the outcomes that this study aimed to investigate. This chapter will also analyse some of the restricting factors that the researcher came across when conducting both primary and secondary research.

The final part of this chapter and this study will recommend areas in the industry that pose some interest for future study.

The researcher is confident that the research question and the research objectives have been adequately addressed.

5.2 Research Limitations

The main limitation throughout this research study was time constraints and a small sample size of 74 respondents. The researcher is aware that this sample size cannot effectively represent beauty consumers but it is important to note that the data collected was rich and accurately complemented other primary data collected.

The triangulation of this data, as seen in Chapter 4, proved that even though the data collected was on a smaller scale; it still lent itself to an important insight into the research question. There were clear areas found in this chapter that will make for further probing in that particular sector of the cosmetic PR sector.

The researcher found difficulty in the low level of insight into the cosmetic PR industry found throughout the literature review process. This was a research limitation but one that proved to prompt the researcher to ask questions during both interviews that would fill those gaps.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

After reviewing the literature, there were large gaps that showed that the information available to the researcher was dated. Both interviewees and the survey participants provided an accurate and up to date account of the research question. However, there is a lot more room for further research, especially in the case of the beauty consumer and how they perceive bloggers and cosmetic PR tactics- largely, the information collected highlighted that most of the beauty consumers that participated in the survey saw bloggers talking through press packages as unreliable and dishonest. The researcher believes that there is a framework in this issue that would lend to insightful research that would benefit the PR professional; the blogger; and the beauty consumer.

Further research should also focus more on figuring out the next channel of communication between the beauty brand and the consumer. The literature reviewed provided an excellent insight into the foundations of PR; the value of certain tactics; the importance of relationship management; stakeholder engagement and blogger collaboration as a process; the social influencer phenomenon; and what types of social media tactics are used in PR. But, as
mentioned in section 5.2, most of these insights are dated and not truly representative of PR as a business concept in the cosmetic industry. A dedicated study framework would be invaluable to the cosmetic PR industry that highlighted clearer communication channels for everyone involved in the cosmetic PR industry. This would allow for more credible blogger activity and would create a heightened brand image for a beauty brand.

Another area that should be pursued for further research is the analysis of honesty in the blogosphere and how important it is for a blogger to be transparent to their followers. There is potential to embark on another survey, on a much larger scale, that would better understand why beauty blogger followers’ see bloggers that talk through press packages as dishonest and secretly advertising. The data collected from the survey in this study has shown that despite there being an ASAI (Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland) regulation introduced this year which requires bloggers to make it known if they are paid to talk about a product by hash-tagging sponsored or ad, the consumer still sees bloggers who do not get paid to talk about products as dishonest and in genuine.

5.4 Reflections

Throughout my studies in PR, I have followed the cosmetic PR industry with great passion. Moving from selling cosmetic products for one of the most successful beauty brands of today to working as a PR intern with L’Oréal has made sure that I am aware of all the avenues that need attention is the cosmetic industry. Largely, my practical work findings are still growing and I am lucky enough to continue to grow with a company that is passionate about cosmetic PR and one that is the top cosmetic company in the world because of this. My studies of both PR and cosmetic PR, on the other hand, have pushed me to constantly be alert and aware of the ever changing and fast-paced digital world that now controls the beauty consumer’s behaviour.

I have found that that there is work to be done in relation to how beauty brands are connecting with beauty consumers. I have also found a concerning issue of credibility when it comes to bloggers and the way they frame beauty content for their followers. It is clear that both the beauty brand and the blogger see importance in a strong and loyal relationship yet there is an undercurrent that highlights how the consumer is not being targeted in the right way from the brand using the blogger.

I believe that I have gained an in-depth understanding of how PR works in the cosmetic industry, as well as how the beauty consumer behaves on social media.
Bibliography


## Grunig’s 4 PR models

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**Appendix A: Tables of Information**

1.1
Why is stakeholder engagement critical for healthy businesses?

Stakeholder engagement ensures healthy business programs are viable, strategic, relevant, and actionable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of Stakeholder Engagement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Align healthy business programs with community expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Start a dialogue to address criticism and proactively address concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify roadblocks to health programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assess the best management approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Obtain input on ideas, policies, and practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Improve operations, products, and/or services</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Determine the appropriate health metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Community Connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Understand perceptions and norms</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identify gaps in performance and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Earn the &quot;social license&quot; to deploy health programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tap additional resources, networks, and expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Create new business models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support new market entry</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Form partnerships and joint ventures</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(healthybusiness.bsr.org, n.d.)
1.3

182 BEAUTY COMPANIES ARE OWNED BY 7 MAJOR LEADERS

Johnson & Johnson

L'Oréal

Rogaine

Shiseido

Estée Lauder Companies

Le Labo

Unilever

TIGI

Procter & Gamble

Un
g

Pantene

Coty

Garnier

SK II

Challenge and Succeed

Lustforbeauty

Dove

P&G

Soap

Gillette

Willett and Gould, 2017
Appendix B: Survey Questions

1. Are you Male or Female?

2. Please tick what age group you fit into...
   a. 17-25
   b. 26-32
   c. 32-39
   d. 40+

3. Where do you find out about new beauty products?
   a. Radio
   b. TV
   c. Youtube
   d. Facebook
   e. Snapchat
   f. Instagram
   g. Other (please specify)

4. What platform do you use most when researching beauty products?
   a. Instagram
   b. Facebook
   c. Snapchat
   d. Youtube

5. Do you think that larger scale beauty bloggers (over 30k followers) are more reliable for beauty reviews than smaller beauty bloggers? if 'Yes' please explain below...
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. Do you think bloggers’ are believable when talking through press packages?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. Who is your favourite beauty blogger? And why?

8. What prompts you to buy beauty products out of the choice below...
   a. TV adverts
   b. Blogger recommendations
   c. Other (please specify)

9. What beauty brand/ product do you see the most of on social media?

10. If you had to choose one social media platform to watch and find beauty content on, what platform would that be
    a. Facebook
    b. Instagram
    c. Snapchat
    d. Youtube
Appendix C: Interview Guide 1

- What is the most valuable platform of media that sells your company's products? (in any media)

- What form of media returns/ prompts the most engagement? and how do you track/ measure this?

- Is there any one PR tactic that you consider to be the most effective in terms of consumer influence?

- How has social media impacted the way promotional work is carried out?

- From a professional cosmetic PR perspective, do you think that bloggers and influencers are truthful and reliable with regards to giving their honest opinion about products?

- Do you consider blogger collaboration an effective way to sell products?

- Can you tell me about how you get new products to bloggers and what is involved in that process?

- What has been the biggest change in how PR work is done in Company X in the last five years?

- Why do you think it is important for brands to connect with beauty bloggers?

- Is planning a PR strategy and campaign for traditional media easier or more difficult than that for new media or social media?

- Do you think that social media is reliable when it comes to the cosmetic industry? or do you think it will shift again- back to traditional media PR tactics?

- Can you share with me the most important traditional media PR tactic that you consider to be integral the function of cosmetic PR?
Appendix D: Interview Guide 2

• Where do you get information when you need to buy a new beauty product?

• As a blogger/ influencer, what do you see as being the most important thing a brand’s PR team needs to do when contacting a blogger/ influencer?

• Why do you think it is important for beauty brands to invest in blogger/ influencer collaboration?

• Have you noticed any changes in how beauty brands contact you now compared to 2 or 3 years ago? If so, what are those noted changes?

• Do you think beauty brands need to use traditional media PR tactics to get product launches out to their customers? Or do you believe social media is better?

• What social media platform is the best, in your opinion, for telling consumers about beauty products? Twitter/ Snapchat/ Facebook/ Instagram? And why?

• What do you think is the most important thing for cosmetic brands to consider when sending out press packages?

• If you were the PR executive in a large cosmetic company, what would you see as being the most important thing about the relationship between you (the PR executive) and bloggers/ influencers?

• How important is social media coverage in learning about cosmetics, to you?

• How do you, as a blogger, frame your beauty content for your followers? And why do you frame it that way?
## Appendix E: Survey Results

### Q1
Are you Male or Female?

*Answered: 74  Skipped: 0*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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*Figure 1*
Q2

Please tick what age group your fit into

Answered: 74   Skipped: 0

![Bar chart showing age group distribution](image)

<table>
<thead>
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Figure 2
Where do you find out about new beauty products?

**Answered:** 74  **Skipped:** 0

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<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
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**Figure 3**
What platform do you use most when researching beauty products?

Answered: 73  Skipped: 1

**Answer Choices**
- Instagram: 19.18%  14
- Facebook: 16.44%  12
- Snapchat: 8.22%  6
- Youtube: 49.32%  36
- Instagram: 6.85%  5

**Total** 73

*Figure 4*
Do you think that larger scale beauty bloggers (over 30k followers) are more reliable for beauty reviews than smaller beauty bloggers? If ‘Yes’ please explain below.

**Answer Choices**

- **Yes**
  - 14.86% (11 responses)
- **No**
  - 74.32% (55 responses)
- **If Yes (please explain)**
  - 10.81% (8 responses)

**TOTAL**

- 74 responses

*Figure 5*
Do you think bloggers’ are believable when talking through press packages?

Answered: 74  Skipped: 0

Yes

No

If 'No' (please...)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

ANSWER CHOICES

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got paid to say its good
8/9/2017 8:47 PM

They almost always seem ingenuine
8/9/2017 8:52 PM

Sponsored
8/9/2017 11:44 AM

Most of the time
8/9/2017 6:13 AM

They could be secretly advertising
8/9/2017 12:37 AM

If there not sponsored posts I believe them but if there sponsored then really there just paid to say it!
8/7/2017 10:42 PM

Personally, I’d have a bias against paid/sponsored reviews or posts
8/7/2017 8:05 PM

usually skip through any sponsored content
8/7/2017 6:48 PM

Sometimes cause they are being paid
8/7/2017 5:20 PM

if there not sponsored posts I believe them but if there sponsored then really there just paid to say it!
8/7/2017 10:42 PM

Personally, I’d have a bias against paid/sponsored reviews or posts
8/7/2017 8:05 PM

usually skip through any sponsored content
8/7/2017 6:48 PM

Sometimes cause they are being paid
8/7/2017 5:20 PM

44
They almost always seem ingenuine.

They could be secretly advertising.

If there not sponsored posts I believe them but if there sponsored then really there just paid to say it!
Who is your favourite beauty blogger? And why?

Answered: 31  Skipped: 43

Fill in the comment box...

ANSWER CHOICES

- Fill in the comment box below

TOTAL

Comments (61)

I don't have any favourite bloggers

Ruthy Ruby

Pippa O'Connor - she's real & relatable

Pipppa O'Connor

Pipppa

Leanne woodfall as she only supports brands that are cruelty free and peaches and cream as the products are more in my price range

Chloe Boucher, Chloe is so aware of the industry and ingredients in products.

Not following anyone

Don't follow bloggers

Tanya Burr

I don't have any favourite bloggers

Kim kardashian

PrettySickly, seems honest about reviews

Jeffree star

Murhi Ruby

Ettie Lalonde because she is genuine and only collaborates with brands she really loves

Rachel o Leary
Lisa Jordan...she's shows a wide variety of products for different budgets

Amelia Lima/Tali/Fleur de Force

Don't know

Just Jordan

Ruthy Ruby

Jamie Gen

Chloe morello

Pippa O'Connor

ScSue

Rutby Ruby

Tara Farrell

Katie Jane Hughes. She provides the audience with more authentic and natural makeup

Katie Jane Hughes. She provides the audience with more authentic and natural makeup

Jaclyn Hill

Chloe Boucher

Sail Hughes, she's cool

Sharon from Colourpop Cosmetics as she goes through all their products in depth and how they to use them. I also really like Mark Rodgers as he's very honest about the products quality regardless of price or the f that they may be released by a celebrity

Just Jordan... Funny, honest, real and interesting!

So sue me

Faces by grace... I feel she is genuine

just jordan... she's normal. doesn't take things too serious. most bloggers think they are the bees knees and are up their own holes. makes that person unlikable

Faces by grace because she review products that are affordable and more expensive products but will also give you a tip or something todo with makeup
Viva glam kay she will tell you when she isn't happy with a product
Rosie Connolly
Coco illi, she seems realistic
None I go with recommendations from family and friends
Just Jordan

Pippa o Connor. Generally the stuff she reviews suits me and tips at good

Sophie Shoheh
Pippa-really genuine about the products
I like a few but probably retro flame as I've same skin type as her (pale )
Not interested in beauty bloggers
None

Tar Mar- i like to follow bloggers that are from the place I live. Her makeup is really natural but you can still tell she knows what she's doing
Lisa Eldridge, down to earth, makeup is always pretty and she had the credentials to back it up
Desi Perkins, changes a lot but ATM she's fun to follow
Facesbygrace and Rosie Connolly
Faces by grace, seems very genuine!
Just Jordan Pippa o Connor

Figure 7
Q8
What prompts you to buy beauty products out of the choice below

Answered: 74  Skipped: 0

**ANSWER CHOICES**

- TV adverts
- Blogger recommendations
- Other (please specify)

**RESPONSES**

- TV adverts: 9.46% (7 responses)
- Blogger recommendations: 66.22% (49 responses)
- Other (please specify): 24.32% (18 responses)

**TOTAL**

74 responses

---

**Responses:**

- Reviews, ingredients, company values
- Need
- Personal recommendations from friends
- Magazine
- Google or browsing in shops
- YouTube
- Just my own research
- When I have tried it myself
- Product reviews/ratings

View respondent's answers for each response.
I often go into Brown Thomas to try samples of products before purchasing or I go online to read reviews about the products. I would then maybe see if a beauty bloggers recommends it but it’s not necessarily my go to. I prefer peer recommendations as I trust them more.

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<td>Friends recommendation</td>
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**Figure 8**
Q9 Customize Exsort

What beauty brand/product do you see the most of on social media?
Answered: 29  Skipped: 45

Please fill in your answer...

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%  70%  80%  90%  100%

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%  70%  80%  90%  100%

ANSWER CHOICES
▼ Please fill in your answer in the comment box below

TOTAL
Comments (66)

100.00%  29

Most bloggers will almost always use a MAC lipstick

Don't know

At the moment Maybelline has a big campaign running, benefit constantly has press packages and I see a lot of tarte with the American b bloggers

Maxfactor

Loads of different ones!

A lot of shit that bloggers get for free

Oriflame

Urban decay

Rimmel & Mac

Morphe, charlotte t, nars, mac, inglot

Highlighters
At the moment, contouring palettes
- Benefit or Bobbi Brown
- NARS
- Inglot
- Benefit
- MAC
- MAC Studio Fix
- Kat Von D
- Anastasia Beverly Hills
- Charlotte Tilbury

Lots of contouring videos but unsure of brand
- MAC
- Urban Decay
- Kat Von D
- Morphe
- Jenner/Kardashian products
- Morphe
- Anastasia Beverly Hills
- Benefit

I don't know as I don't take much notice of these things.

I have been using a lot of Glossier products recently
- Glossier

I am not sure.
Nyx
8/7/2017 3:26 PM
On the tv I would say rival and online Charlotte Tilburg, ysl, mac
8/7/2017 3:25 PM

Too Faced
8/7/2017 3:02 PM

Teeth whitening
8/7/2017 3:02 PM

Don't know
8/7/2017 6:56 PM

Benefit, Colorpop cosmetic, Charlotte Tilbury, Mac

Inglot
8/5/2017 4:24 PM

Giorgio Armani Fragrance/YSL
8/5/2017 4:15 PM

Mac
8/5/2017 4:15 PM

Inglot
8/5/2017 4:05 PM

I don't know
8/5/2017 4:00 PM

Charcoal mask
8/5/2017 3:26 PM

Mac cosmetics
8/5/2017 3:25 PM

Rimmel
8/5/2017 3:19 PM

Toothpastes
8/5/2017 3:16 PM

Tommy moly
8/5/2017 3:18 PM

Urban decay
8/5/2017 3:17 PM

L'Oreal
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L'Oreal
8/5/2017 3:07 PM

YSL
8/5/2017 3:06 PM

Sosueme
8/5/2017 3:06 PM

Tan
8/5/2017 2:54 PM

Bobbi brown
8/5/2017 2:52 PM

View respondent's answers
View respondent's answers
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View respondent's answers

Figure 9
If you had to choose one social media platform to watch and find beauty content on, what platform would that be?
Appendix F: Interview Transcripts

1. Interview A- Louise Cooney, Blogger, August 11th, 2017

- Where do you get information when you need to buy a new beauty product?
  I would mostly get my information from social media, mainly beauty bloggers recommendations.
- As a blogger/ influencer, what do you see as being the most important thing a brand’s PR team needs to do when contacting a blogger/ influencer?
  I think it’s important they send a personalised message and not a generic email to everyone. It makes the message they are sending seem less important/interesting. I think they should also have a good understanding of the bloggers niche and audience.
- Why do you think it is important for beauty brands to invest in blogger/ influencer collaboration?
  Because consumers find bloggers words more trustworthy than advertising these days as they find them more relatable.
- Have you noticed any changes in how beauty brands contact you now compared to two or three years ago? if so- what are those noted changes?
  Yes, as my blog has grown I definitely have more people interested in working together now. The rules have changed in terms of ASA1 regulations, and a lot of brands have budgets now for influencer collaborations so it is very different.
- Do you think beauty brands need to use traditional media PR tactics to get product launches out to their customers? or do you believe social media is better?
  I think it depends on the reach of the traditional media – but a lot of the numbers out of there at the moment are outdated. I also think it’s important to consider return of investment. Is it worth a beauty brand paying a blogger to talk about a product or feature it on their blog or channel if the brands audience isn’t sitting there. It doesn’t make sense. A brand needs to see the value in investing in blogger collaboration.
- What social media platform is the best, in your opinion, for telling consumers about beauty products? Twitter/ Snapchat/ Facebook/ Instagram? and why?
  I would say probably Snapchat as it is raw and unedited. It’s also videos so it gives you time to explain the product, show it, talk about it.
- What do you think is the most important thing for cosmetic brands to consider when sending out press packages?
  It’s important to include a press release with prices, and information on when and where the products are available. I find them so helpful when I am talking about a product I have been sent. If all the right information is on it- I can communicate it to my followers, better. But it’s also important to ensure that the correct shade has been selected for whoever it is being sent to as they won’t use it if it’s not the right shade.
- If you were the PR executive in a large cosmetic company, what would you see as being the most important thing about the relationship between you (the PR executive) and bloggers/ influencers?
  Developing a loyal, long-term relationship is important. Ensure the relationship is mutually beneficial and both blogger and brand will both continue to help each other grow.
- How important is social media coverage in learning about cosmetics, to you?
  It’s very important. There is just so much make-up out there it’s hard to know what’s best and what to go for, but having lots of experts on my phone talking about different products on a daily basis really helps me decide what might work for me.
• How do you, as a blogger, frame your beauty content for your followers? and why do you frame it that way?

I am always open and honest about the fact that I am not an expert. I like learning about things, and I love finding really good essential products like foundation, lipstick, bronzer, mascara. I share my favourites with followers on my Snapchat or Instagram occasionally.
2. Interview B- PR Executive, Large Cosmetic Brand, August 28th, 2017

- What is the most valuable platform of media that sells your company's products? (in any media)
For us, I can’t exactly say what platform sells the most products as it’s not just one platform we monitor and in fact we don’t have an application (as it has not been invented yet) that can monitor or track how sales have been made; it’s easy to ask people but that’s just hearsay and not fact, but usually when we launch a product in Ireland- we send out press packs to bloggers and influencers. We can monitor their activity with an application called Traackr. Traackr holds all the bloggers information across all their social media channels. It tells you what reach they have and how many people are watching them on any given platform. This is really useful for us. I would have to say that any video user generated content on social media is really effective in terms of actually influencing the consumer. I personally much rather watching a beauty blogger talk about the product and try it on so I can see for myself how I feel about it. We have a lot of beauty bloggers that work with us through video and that includes Snapchat; Instagram stories; Youtube and sometimes Facebook live.

- What form of media returns/ prompts the most engagement? and how do you track/ measure this?
As I have mentioned; we cannot track exactly what prompts the most engagement but with Traackr it is possible to see how a bloggers followers interacts with them and how many people have seen their posts.

- Is there any one PR tactic that you consider to be the most effective in terms of consumer influence?
I think perfect communication is a tactic that is the most important in terms of connecting with and influencing the consumer. Without that; there can be so many issues that can really damage a brand and relationships. If a PR professional does not have perfect communication- and I mean: perfect spelling; great writing skills; witty sense of humour; and a passion for the digital world- I would think they are in the wrong industry.

- How has social media impacted the way promotional work is carried out?
Social media (SM) has totally changed the way we do things in PR, in general. Before SM there was a very linear way to carry out PR- a very traditional way that complemented traditional media. Now it’s like you are pulled across so many digital avenues and it can be really challenging as sometimes you need a hawk eye. but it has made it much more exciting. I do wonder will it last, though?! I can see this 'influencer/ blogger' thing fizzling out. Most of the bigger bloggers now have turned themselves into business people so it seems like they even know it is kind of unreliable as a career path.

- From a professional cosmetic PR perspective, do you think that bloggers and influencers are truthful and reliable with regards to giving their honest opinion about products?
To be honest- once a PR person has a good relationship with a blogger or influencer you can be sure that they will be reliable; loyal; and truthful. Of course, you cannot read people’s minds but managing and protecting a valuable relationship like the blogger & brand one, is very important. When I get social media coverage reports from my PR interns I can see how interested a blogger is in the products we have sent them. It’s very easy to tell when a blogger is disinterested because they won’t be passionate about the press pack or they just won’t put it up. When I see this happening I make sure to follow up with the blogger and try and see what the issue is; if there is one.

- Do you consider blogger collaboration an effective way to sell products?
In short, yes. Currently in Company X, managing the relationship between the brand and bloggers is one of the most important day-to-day activities for the PR team. We are constantly updating our ‘who to watch list’ as we watch people’s social media following grow. We analyse their followers and their
interaction and engagement and then approach them if they are right for the brand. When I say ‘right for the brand’ I really mean: will they influence their followers to buy the product.

- Can you tell me about how you get new products to bloggers and what is involved in that process?

We have a process that works really well. It is used by all cosmetic companies and it really is the only [current] way to get products to bloggers and get them talking about that product. We send out a press pack to everyone on our blogger and influencer list. This consists of the product; a press release; and a comp slip (a little note from the PR team that introduces the product to them). Once we send that to the blogger and influencer list, we would follow up with an e-blast that is, basically, a digital press pack. In an e-blast there are high resolution images of the products attached to the email with the press release and the body copy usually is the same or similar message as the comp slip. It is so important for us to work with graphic designers that understand the look and feel of the brand. By liaising with them, and keeping up a good working relationship; we can ensure that the press releases sent out are of the highest standard.

- What has been the biggest change in how PR work is done in Company X in the last five years?

In the last five years, we have had to re-strategize our day-to-day runnings from a PR perspective. We have had to employ more people with new skills in digital content. For example, we had to interview a far bigger range of applicants when a PR job came up as it was not only a fluency in traditional media we were looking for but a fluency with new media (at the time, social media now). There was a lot of people who had to upskill, as well.

- Why do you think it is important for brands to connect with beauty bloggers?

It is so important as our consumers and our target audience are now much more easily accessed through these bloggers and influencers. We have to keep that in mind. Big brands have to make this a priority and to be honest, there are a lot of people whose role is to connect with bloggers and influencers and manage that relationship with daily contact.

- Is planning a PR strategy and campaign for traditional media easier or more difficult than that for new media or social media?

I would say it is more difficult, but not by much. The same objectives need to be met but with traditional media there is a few more stages to reach when, let’s say, the artwork is ready for the press release- we then need to send it to print and get it delivered etc. With a social media campaign: it is a case of when the artwork is ready (or whatever graphics or media is being used) we make sure it is emailed and transferred virtually. Everything is easier virtually.

- Do you think that social media is reliable when it comes to the cosmetic industry? or do you think it will shift again- back to traditional media PR tactics?

You can’t always rely on social media. That’s the risk with it. It’s a bittersweet relationship but also a very necessary one. I think traditional media will always be there and it may have a re-birth again. But, until then it’s about managing social media the right way and being very quick to notice what is being said by who about our product.

- Can you share with me the most important traditional media PR tactic that you consider to be integral the function of cosmetic PR?

In our organisation, press releases are one of the most important things about the day to day schedule of the PR team. You can probably pick up how important they are to this business from my previous answers but I can’t stress enough how important they are. They have evolved to a digital format that requires a graphics team and a PR eye. We liaise with graphic designers to make sure the look and feel of the brand is communicated on the press release as well as all the relevant information.

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Appendix G: Interview Consent Forms

Interviewee: Louise Cooney, Blogger at Louise Cooney Blog.

Interviewee Consent Form

- I confirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I give my consent to participate in this research, conducted by Ruth Walsh. This research is part of the Public Relations with New Media course at CIT’s Department of Communications.
- I understand that the aim of this research is to investigate how PR tactics have changed for large cosmetic brands.
- I give my consent to allow this interview to be used for the purpose of this research study.
- I understand I can withdraw from the study, at any time, without repercussions, before or during the interview.
- I can confirm that I have read and understood the above. I am aware of my role within this research and I voluntarily agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signed: [Type Name]: Louise Cooney, permission given over email
Date: 22/08/2017
Interviewer: PR Executive, Cosmetic brand (Anonymous).

**Interviewee Consent Form**

- I confirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I give my consent to participate in this research, conducted by Ruth Walsh. This research is part of the Public Relations with New Media course at CIT’s Department of Communications.
- I understand that the aim of this research is to investigate how PR tactics have changed for large cosmetic brands.
- I give my consent to allow this interview to be used for the purpose of this research study, on the basis that I am quoted anonymously and my organisation is not named.
- I understand I can withdraw from the study, at any time, without repercussions, before or during the interview.
- I can confirm that I have read and understood the above. I am aware of my role within this research and I voluntarily agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

*Signed: [Type Name]: Permission given over email*

*Date: 28/08/2017*