

History has a way of repeating itself, even in PR

 By [Khangelani Dziba](#)

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Jeepers, it's already February of the new year and one is still trying to shake off the December mood and trying to recover from the January blues. It's almost made it impossible for one to focus and actually put their thoughts to paper, who else can relate?



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Like most budding writers who have a hectic but balanced working life, you almost always have to remind yourself that it's time to get back into it and not waste any more time. But I think I can finally say, I now have gained my sanity back and am writing again!

Shift is influencing the way we do marketing and PR

So, you'll recall in the previous year I had written a piece that I was very much passionate about which really spoke to the inevitable changes that are taking place in the PR space.

[Let's face it, PR is a dying practice and there is no going back!](#) really sought to highlight the fact that these changes that are taking place are not avoidable, and if anything, need to inform and form a part of how we practice in PR. If you don't believe me, check out Penquin's latest *Marketing trends to look out for in 2018*. A shift is taking place, influencing how we do marketing and PR.



Marketing trends to look out for in 2018

Penquin 15 Feb 2018



So, I got back to the office this year all resolute and keen to take on brand challenges like never before. As it turns out, our clients were already hyped up too and were ready to hit the ground running with new ideas of how they thought they are going to be able to shift and take things forward with their brands.

Of course, as a practitioner, it is always exciting to see how brands are going to change the game and align with how we as

their agency partners are going to be able to help them get there.

Earned media

On this particular morning, I attended a full day briefing where the client was excited to share the direction that they were going to be taking for 2018 and would form part of a major KPI for all stakeholders involved.

Earned media. Earned media, Earned media in essence, was the “new” buzz phrase that would have to lead our thinking and approach to these particular brands. Meh! This was my first reaction because I thought geez, history sure does have a way of repeating itself, even in PR.

The idea of *earned media* plays on the ability to organically get coverage based on an activation or stunt that leads to a broader conversation that will ultimately get media and journalist buzzing and wanting to cover that particular phenomenon.

This, for me, presented two scenarios:

1. A challenge because I don't see media in our country, and in our space, getting aroused anymore at just any stunt that is put out there in the hopes that it lands on page three. And in a political climate like that of South Africa, where there are always developments taking place, competing for coverage becomes that much harder.
2. It also, nevertheless, presented an opportunity for us to perhaps think out of the box and perhaps look at this category a lot more differently. By this I mean, as cited in Penquin's report, we cannot do things in the same way nor can we look at getting coverage in the same way and platforms we did in the past. Earned media for me represents that old way of thinking and perhaps needs to be redefined and reintroduced as what I choose to call **earned partnerships** with media.

Earned partnerships

Earned partnerships I define as a collaboration between brands, media and editors to be able get the coverage desired whilst also providing publications with the kind of content that will enable them to sell newspapers, get listeners tuned in to their radio stations (in some instances) and ultimately get readers that are online, clicking through their platforms to follow the story.

It's easier said than done yes, but that is the reality we are faced with in my humble opinion and need to start working around in order for us to be able to get to where we need to.

Publications have made their stance clear and that is, in more cases than not, they are not able to give our brands free coverage but they are able to collaborate and work with us in earned partnerships to get us what we need to.

Why not heed the call and get us to a better place?

ABOUT KHANGELANI DZIBA

Khangelani Dziba is the divisional head of PR & influencer partnerships at Rapt Creative. They are a Master in Brand Leadership graduate from Vega School and are passionate about gender, diversity, and inclusion in brand advertising.

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