



## CVC of Atlanta

### Winter 2017 - Quarterly Meeting Wrap Up

#### **Telling Your Story of Community Impact: Opportunities and Challenges**

**Hosted by King & Spalding, LLP**

Moderator: Cheryl Preheim, Anchor, 11 Alive (WXIA-TV)

Panelists: Charles Edwards, Media Coach/Crisis Advisor, Jackson Spalding

Phillip Kish, Director of Digital Content, 11 Alive

Lain Shakespeare, Corporate Citizenship Director, MailChimp

Josh Martin, Senior Director of Digital & Social Media, Arby's

#### Highlights and Best Practices:

Consider sending handwritten notes to convey your thanks for community partnerships or support. (Edwards)

Vary your social media postings based on what you are trying to achieve and who you are trying to reach. (Kish)

Social media is not about talking at followers, it is about listening and having a conversation with your customers and supporters. (Martin)

With social media, be IN the moment. Do not force the moment. (Edwards)

Companies must trust their social media handlers to act quickly. Timing is everything. Look for opportunities to promote your brand, but do not force them. Be authentic. (Martin)

MailChimp is growing quickly, so it is important to engage employees in a meaningful way from their first day on the job. The company offers ways for employees to get involved throughout the year, and finds value in making their corporate citizenship competitive. The company is partnering with The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta on MailChimp Community College.

Employees must apply for the program, and only 12 people at a time may participate. Participants learn about community issues and talk about how these challenges may be addressed by MailChimp through an equity lens. This program has been very well received by employees. (Shakespeare)

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Life feels busy when you are not following your passion. When you find your purpose, life is fulfilling. (Edwards)

Consider sharing stories with the traditional media (TV, radio, print) that are humble, creative, and unique and that give “underdogs” the tools they need to succeed. Tell meaningful stories that demonstrate mission or purpose in action with your media contacts. News anchors are looking for unique stories that are authentic and relatable. For example, someone reached out to share information about a grassroots organization called Concrete Jungle, an organization that collects produce from trees and plants in the public right-of-way to feed the hungry. Watching people pick produce is not that compelling. But hearing from a hungry child who received food from Concrete Jungle’s efforts creates a memorable, high-impact story. (Preheim)

If you build something great and adhere to your values, it will pay off. MailChimp sponsors the Decatur Book Festival (DBF) each year. In order to help make a stronger connection between the DBF and their employees, the company started the “Read This Summer” book club. This group focused on books and other writings by authors that would be featured at this unique Labor Day Weekend festival. Forty percent of all employees participated in the book club, and each became more enthused about personally participating in the festival. This was a win-win for everyone and helped MailChimp create positive impact for their nonprofit partner, DBF. (Shakespeare)

Media is changing quickly. For example, social media used to be a “nice to have” rather than a “must have.” But these days, the social media team is right in the middle of the newsroom! Stay on top of analytics. Ask yourself, “What is happening now, and how can my company embrace it?” See what works, and be willing to allocate resources. For example, video is currently king. And you can never go wrong with good photos. (Kish)

When considering outreach for a community effort, treat it individually. Consider what is going out and what is coming in. Then, react accordingly. (Edwards)

Make your story relatable. Take something happening in the moment and weave it into your storytelling. (Preheim)

Companies must be authentic when sharing about their community involvement. Investment reports are often thought of as boring. Community Investment Reports are emotional, but they are typically seen as marketing. MailChimp treats community efforts as one of their investment portfolios, and they use video to tell their story. This allows the company to authentically share their community investment story and resonates with employees. (Shakespeare)

Share stats with style. People remember emotion and stories. Consider what you want listeners to do with the information you share. Lure them in with emotion, then weave in the stats. Every company can tell a purposeful story by including a beginning (emotion), middle (share stats) and end (what you strive for people to do with the information). (Edwards)

Does your company know its pride center? When a company can articulate this through purposeful storytelling, it resonates with customers and employees. (Shakespeare)

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Be aware of your surroundings and audience. Create strong, engaging content and be creative. Speak with clarity and integrity, and think about what your audience desires, and you will tap into your audience effectively. (Kish)

Have influencers (executives) tell stories about their experiences volunteering with your company. They can do this by word-of-mouth, social media, intranet, etc. This resonates with other employees. (Martin)

Allow employees from all generations to participate in building community efforts. Creating things together resonates with Millennials, GenXers and other employees. (Preheim)

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