ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: How property and casualty insurance companies specializing in transportation insurance are using corporate websites to communicate with external audiences

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The body of scholarship focused on public relations continues to grow – research on the principles of dialogic communication, organization-public relationships, the Internet and social media – all current topics among public relations scholars and practitioners alike. Research has suggested the need for public relations practitioners to improve and enhance the ability of publics to engage in communications that have significance to an organization (Hallahan, 2000, 474).

There is a void in industry-specific public relations research. In particular, a lack of research pertaining to public relations and the insurance industry is evident. Without industry-specific public relations research, practitioners in this segment are at a disadvantage when trying to engage key publics.

This study examined how property and casualty insurance company websites are being used to communicate with external audiences. Specifically, the study looked at how this medium is being used to serve the news media and other pertinent stakeholders like customers, prospective customers, investors and claimants using the principles of dialogic communication. The investigation provides a snapshot in time of how companies in the insurance industry are employing the use of technology to enhance the relationships of the organization and its publics.