



10 Tips for PR Planning

FROM A FORTUNE 100 CHIEF
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

VOLUME 1/3

Meet the Expert **Tara Smith**

Voxus PR Managing Partner

Tara has more than 25 years of experience in marketing and communications for technology companies. She was most recently the Chief Communications Officer, Corporate Vice President, and General Manager of Global Communications at Intel. Prior to Intel, she was a Senior Vice President at WE Communications. In 2023, she brought her expertise to Voxus PR and serves as Managing Partner.

What does success look like?

“The most important part of any plan is being clear on your desired outcome. Everything else should flow from that end goal. I always have a point of view on this, but one of the questions I often ask my executive stakeholders as I build out a plan is, “Imagine a year from now and we’ve been wildly successful. What does that look like to you?” It’s a great way to find out early in the process if there is misalignment or if they have something very specific in mind.”

How do you plan to measure and report on that success?

“These first two go together because, too often, communicators frame success in very subjective terms. I like to focus on hard numbers, especially in engineering or finance-driven cultures. When it’s time for budget decisions, it’s much easier to have a data-driven discussion versus one based on feelings or opinions. Many tools are available to track program performance, so I won’t dwell on any one specifically. The key is simply having a consistent set of metrics you establish up front and then report out on. This way you own the narrative of how you are performing against your plan, and you can properly market the work.”

What else does the data say?

“A data-driven approach to communications is critical not only for measuring impact, but also for providing the insights needed for planning. I like to look at a combination of internal and external datapoints – what’s working and what’s not – including fresh data on my target audiences. What are they most interested in? How are they influenced? How and where are they consuming content? I’ve often used this as a litmus test for agencies and consultants I work with. What can they tell me about my target audiences and the environment that is new, different, and insightful versus what I already know?”

