

VISION
LEADERSHIP
COMMUNICATION

MEDIA SAVVY
IN THE
INTERNET ERA

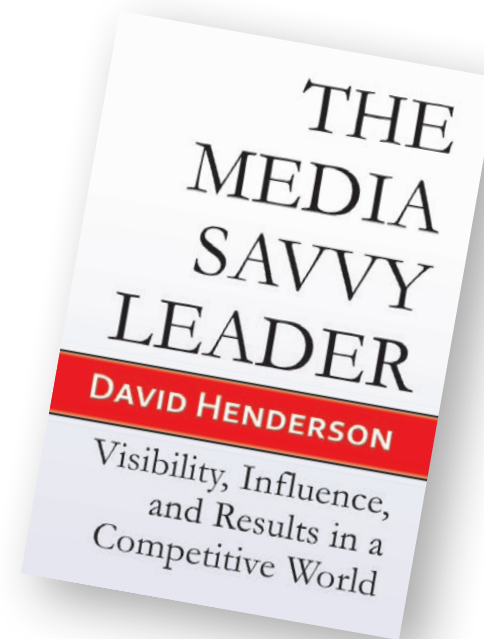
DAVID HENDERSON

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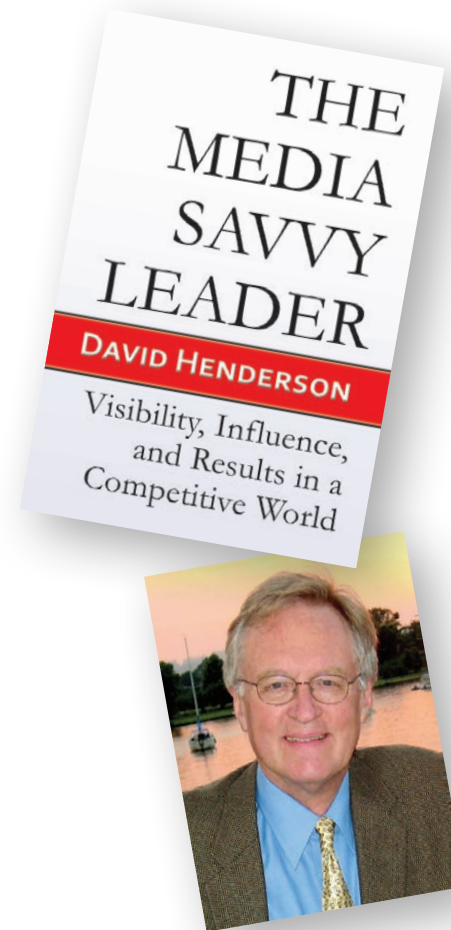


Praise for “**The Media Savvy Leader: Visibility, Influence and Results in a Competitive World**” and David Henderson

“Among the attributes of leadership, the ability to communicate clearly has never been more important than it is today. If you want to become a more effective communicator, David Henderson has the experience and the skills to help.” – **Dan Rather**. *Television news anchor and journalist.*

“David Henderson knows what we journalists know: the more that news and information saturate our society, the more savvy and discriminating the media and their audiences become. An executive wanting to communicate effectively must be honest and real. David’s got the skill, the experience, and the instincts to help you find your authentic voice.” – **Lisa Mullins**. *Anchor, Public Radio International/BBC’s “The World”*

“David is an Emmy Award-winning former CBS network news correspondent so he knows what it is like to be a working journalist. As a media-relations advisor and strategist, he has been responsible for stunning successes. Henderson knows the online world and how online communications fits into the mix.” – **David Meerman Scott**. *Marketing strategist, keynote speaker and best-selling author.*



Who do you turn to? You!

There is little room for the status quo or traditional tactics as business and organizations strive for authentic leadership in these challenging times, and beyond. More than ever before, companies will rely on the media—mainstream and the fast-evolving online New Media of Web 2.0—as they seek to build brand awareness, leadership positioning, new opportunities to engage in trust-building conversations with customers and stakeholders, and, ultimately, better financial performance, sales and results.

- **Do you want news of your organization to be heard above the competitive racket?**
- **Do you want to capture the media's attention when the time is right?**
- **Do you want media coverage that translates directly into enhanced reputation, shareholder value and greater sales?**
- **Do you want your messages and vision to be reported clearly and accurately?**
- **Do you want to connect, engage and have dialogue with your stakeholders, prospects, customers, employees and friends?**
- **Do you, as an executive, want to be accurately quoted by the media in a way that boosts your own value and visibility?**

Then, read on. But be prepared to consider bold new directions.

Web 2.0: Do nothing, and it won't be pretty

Billionaire entrepreneur Mark Cuban makes it clear about the importance of knowing how to use the Internet to communicate, to engage in conversations with audiences, and to build brand awareness and value. Cuban, is owner of HDNet, the high definition cable television network, and the Dallas Mavericks, among other ventures.

The Internet has been an essential communications tool for Cuban's business empire. As a high-profile executive, he's actively online and involved in conversations through his personal blog, BlogMaverick.com. Cuban is in control of his image and that of his business.

"In the Internet age," Cuban says, "executives have to learn how to shape information about themselves and their companies, or the Internet will do it for them, and it won't be pretty."



Traditional marketing is broken

The once-effective support structure for executives and leaders—such as public relations, marketing, and advertising agencies—has been shockingly slow to learn the new and ever-changing trends of how to use the Internet... how to harness the interactivity of Web 2.0 to engage audiences in conversations that benefit clients.

We are living today in a new era when conventional methods of getting an organization's messages communicated through the media are either broken or less effective.

There is chaos within the mainstream media. Traditional newspapers are cutting staffs and costs because revenue and audiences have swarmed online. There are fewer viewers of conventional TV news programs. At the same time, the number of online news choices is exploding at an amazing pace. The challenge for anyone in marketing is to locate and connect with audiences.

Mark Cuban is just one of many media savvy leaders to say that today, it is up to a CEO, executive or leader to personally take the initiative and responsibility to get savvy about the Internet, and the new ways of communicating in today's online world.

“The number of online news choices is exploding at an amazing pace.”

Media leadership: 5 easy steps

In the new world of media and Web 2.0—with the erosion of mainstream media and the dramatic rise of online media—CXOs, leaders and managers must learn the techniques to communicate the vision of their organizations in clear, compelling and transparent ways. The days of delegating that important role are over.

Here are my 5 steps to take control, and become a media savvy leader during these challenging times, and into the future:

- 1. Develop personal and trusted media contacts**
- 2. Communicate through captivating storytelling and memorable messages**
- 3. Become the credible voice and face of the organization**
- 4. Learn new trends in media, especially online**
- 5. Get involved in conversations online with customers, prospects and stakeholders**

Read on...

We're working in the fast lane

Today's media savvy leaders know that roughly 82 percent of shareholder value is intangible. It's merely a perception, impression, or... feeling that people have about brands. As such, these leaders are keenly aware that reputations can be injured with a single misstep.

Savvy executives, like CEO Tony Hsieh at Zappos, take the time—as leaders in their respective fields—to forge and build their own personal and trusted media contacts, and strive to understand how the media works.

Hsieh, for example, interacts with customers on his [CEO blog \(http://blogs.zappos.com/blogs/ceo-and-coo-blog\)](http://blogs.zappos.com/blogs/ceo-and-coo-blog) over subjects ranging from how corporate culture reflects on a brand to the challenges of employee layoffs at his own company, an issue that made news. Media stories credited Hsieh with candor and transparency as a CEO in discussing the layoffs.

When it comes to guiding an organization's reputation and value, too much is at stake to have a top executive who distains working with the media. As newsmakers, leaders must learn what to say, the timing of statements, and how to deliver their messages so that the media will pay attention and will most often write favorable stories.

Most of all, they must genuinely welcome opportunities to interact with the media.

Reputation is everything!

Today's most recognized media leaders all share common threads of skill and excellence as great communicators, including the exceptional ability to deliver the true purpose of their message quickly, clearly, and in simple words so that we stop what we are doing to listen, understand, and believe what they say.

These savvy executives also know that successful image management requires planning, the integration of vision and message throughout all levels of their organizations, and their own engagement in behaving as an authentic leader. Why? Because too much is at stake—the value of managing an organization's reputation, as I have stated, is too important to be delegated.

Successful leaders have examined—at one time or another, each in his or her own way—a critical reality of successful leadership in today's media driven world:

Protecting a reputation begins with understanding the implications and potential cost of not protecting a reputation.

Today's best executive communicators know that the investment to protect a reputation is significantly less than the expense needed to fix one that is damaged, sometimes by self-inflicted mistakes.

It's a world of funny sounding names

Learning the importance of today's ever-changing online communications environment of Web 2.0 is essential, and nothing can be dismissed as too trivial or time-consuming. Today's leaders must recognize the powerful interactive reach and influence of social networking channels, including Facebook, Digg, Delicious, Technorati, Mixx, Squidoo, Adium, StumbleUpon, MySpace, and Twitter. Everything is connected, and shows up at Google or Yahoo for the world to see.

Although media savvy leaders often have communications support staff and PR agencies, they can no longer relinquish the voice of their organizations to others. They must take charge to not only inspire customers, prospects and stakeholders with the distinctiveness of their vision but also put a face on their organizations, further enhancing trust and reputation.

Today, leadership is about the openness, clarity and charisma of the person at the helm. We, as a public and an audience, will immediately recognize these leaders, and trust what they say.

How a leader behaves—walks, talks and acts—in the public spotlight is critical.

There is one caveat, however, that merits repeating—to become a media savvy leader in today's world requires a meaningful investment of personal time and involvement by a CXO, senior executive, manager or leader to connect via social media in order to build and strengthen even offline connections.

Everyone likes a great story

Great stories are the sharing of something personal, inspiring or memorable that we, in turn, often feel compelled to share with others. Storytelling—fueled by the interactivity of Web 2.0’s online tools—has become one of today’s most influential methods for credible communications.

While Richard Branson does not run all of the 350 companies under his Virgin brand, it is his individual image and voice that brings each of them to life. With the magnificent grace and timing of a symphony conductor, Branson captures terrific and consistent media coverage by turning highly visible events into stories.

By framing the alliance of American Airlines and British Airways as a near-evil conspiracy, for example, Branson has generated media attention as the beleaguered underdog owner of Virgin Atlantic Airlines in his bid to win gate availability at U.S. airports. When he painted, “No Way AA BA,” on the sides of Virgin aircraft, the media loved it, and Branson got the attention of top government leaders.

We admire Branson’s gutsy flare for publicity largely because his competitive savvy gets the results he wants. By the way, Sir Richard actively engages in conversations through social media sites, such as Twitter.

Oprah Winfrey is unique—she is the brand, the product, the center of her successful universe and its communicator. Everything is all about Oprah, all of the time—from Oprah’s book club to Oprah magazine to Oprah programs to build schools.

Winfrey’s strategic formula is genuine, connects passionately with a sizable loyal audience, and works to make things happen through memorable stories. She often creates her own news—using a blend of traditional and online media—always in a manner that embraces her fans and respects the projects to which she lends her name.

When Branson, Oprah and other media savvy leaders speak, they embrace the power of storytelling, and know the power of personal story to give life to a vision.



Become the credible voice and face of the organization

In today's world—full of hype and message clutter—leaders need to get to the point clearly and quickly when they have something to say. They need to use plain language words that all of us understand—words that are free of jargon, clichés, acronyms, and bravado.

Along these lines, the popular online mini-blogging and social media site [Twitter \(www.twitter.com\)](http://www.twitter.com) has created the 140-character concept of a complete thought or message being communicated in just a few words... or 140-characters. As a veteran news editor observed, Twitter is like a crisp news dispatch.

Leaders must learn to wrap their organization's messages in captivating stories, often using personal anecdotes and examples. The best stories are short, captivating, framed to appeal to our logic and emotion, and supported by facts and data.

Telling interesting stories—the kind that we will listen to with interest and repeat—is the most effective way to connect with audiences on a more personal and trusted level.

Through a story, we can credibly connect with audiences and communicate important and timely issues. We share with audiences an insight and passion about a product, service, or cause. We can subtly position ourselves as a trusted partner to explain a vision or quest with an audience and, in the process, achieve lasting competitive leadership.

Storytelling involves and embraces audiences while discretely underscoring a leader's own reputation, and what is special about what he or she is saying. It's a style to effectively differentiate what's special about an organization from competitors. Contemporary vehicles for storytelling range from speeches before hundreds of people and a personal blog to an ebook, like the one you are now reading.

More than a press release is needed

The whole concept of press releases has changed because of the Internet era. Press releases—while still a stock-in-trade of many PR agencies—seldom result in stories in the mainstream media... partly because few are written as legitimate news stories, and partly because the bar has been raised on what the media needs.

Today's journalists are under mandates from their editors to report fresh, new, and clever stories that will help to give their news organizations an edge over the competition, and create ways to increase revenue—through paid readership, subscriptions, and advertising. Why, then, should any reporter give a news release a second glance when it has been sent it to everyone under the sun, including numerous other people within the same newsroom as well as competitors?

It's not surprising that publicists, like the well-known [Peter Shankman](http://www.geekfactory.com) (www.geekfactory.com) predict that the traditional press release will be dead in a few years.

If you want to generate media coverage, there's a better way. You need to get to know journalists who cover your organization or business sector, develop trusted relationships, and give them a real story. What's more, your chances for making a story happen increase when you provide reporters with resource material, including concise and relevant background, visual material, spokespersons, and opposing viewpoints for balance. It's the best way to have any control over the outcome.

Media savvy in the Internet era mandates a new approach, purpose and techniques for news releases. Frame releases as real news stories, and then, publish your own thoughtful, accurate, credible and useful news and information... online! The payoff will be a vastly enhanced footprint of awareness about your organization:

- 1. Create online “news info” interactive sites to showcase your news and other relevant and timely news about your organization, industry or business. Make it the place to find all the up-to-date news about your organization’s area of expertise.**
- 2. Engage in social media conversations with customers, friends, stakeholders and prospects, using the spectrum of online tools, such as Twitter, Facebook Digg, MySpace and Delicious.**
- 3. Become, as a leader, the Chief Online Experimenter at your organization. Learn new social media trends, such as [TwitterPacks \(http://twitterpacks.pbwiki.com/New+Media,+Social+Media\)](http://twitterpacks.pbwiki.com/New+Media,+Social+Media)**
- 4. Ride the leading edge of online communications techniques... because they will change and improve.**

Much more than a guy in a black turtleneck

Reporters—through the news organizations they represent—wield influence to carry forward the image of charisma, leadership, and excitement in an executive's words. Few leaders know this fact better than [Steve Jobs](http://www.apple.com/pr/bios/jobs.html) (www.apple.com/pr/bios/jobs.html)

Jobs, the legendary co-founder and Chief Executive of Apple, is regarded as one of today's best corporate storytellers, and a master at capturing the media's attention. He communicates clearly and masterfully on an individual basis with reporters, whether a roomful or individually.

Jobs' persuasiveness stems from his personal certainty in his beliefs. When he speaks of an Apple product, for example, you begin to believe that it is the greatest device ever created because Steve Jobs believes it is so. His transparency may seem like a crippling liability, but it is actually a strength.

What makes a keynote address or news conference by Steve Jobs, in particular, so compelling is that his opinions translate directly into Apple's policies and products. Jobs consistently demonstrates his extraordinary merging of unique management and communication styles.

When Jobs speaks, he doesn't talk about his company. He shares his passion over how a MacBook will help unleash your personal creativity or how an iPhone will put your office in the palm of your hand, and help to bring the world closer together. And, all that makes news. What Jobs says is meaningful, and is repeated by his broad audiences, over and over.



The cost is your time; the payoff is immense

How can the new technology of New Media work to enhance visibility for your organization and provide a more compelling and active image online?

All the cool bells and whistles of technology aside, the secrets to accurately communicating news and generating great media attention today may sound a little old-fashioned, but are astonishingly effective:

- **Take responsibility, as a leader, for being the face and voice of your organization.**
- **Create visionary messages that people will find captivating.**
- **Communicate your messages through a clever story. A good story is precisely what the media wants.**
- **Get to the point—quickly and clearly—using words we all understand.**
- **Interweave your messages throughout all levels of your organization, like a beacon shining on a path to enhance understanding.**
- **Be consistent, timely, truthful, and relevant in your messages.**
- **Avoid talking about your organization but rather talk about the value of what your organization does that benefits people.**
- **Embrace the new online communication technology of Web 2.0 with a passion.**
- **Most of all... be transparent, honest and authentic.**

These points do not really look like great secrets, after all, do they?! Each point is simply common sense that respects how today's news media functions in a New Media world. However, using these techniques captures superb and favorable media coverage that reaches vast audiences.

The odd part is that most companies and organizations remain mired in worn-out, thread-bare tactics and dysfunctional internal politics that hinder the growth of a company's image, reputation, and brand.

Isn't it time for a more meaningful and rewarding change?



Do something bold

At Cisco Systems, Jeanette Gibson's job is to embrace and help define the future of online communications. It's also her passion, and few people see into the dynamic future of the exciting convergence of communications, information, and technology with greater clarity and leadership.

She is Director of New Media within Corporate Communications at Cisco Systems, a global company built on a culture of looking into the future of communication among people, communities, governments, and businesses worldwide.

With the Internet's openness and transparency and all of an organization's information out for the public to view, Gibson says, it's important to look at how you are viewed externally and whether that is the brand you want to showcase.

It's critical for executives to be involved in an organization's online strategy, Gibson says. At Cisco, for example, senior executives, including CEO John Chambers, are engaged with blogging, social media and doing podcasts because they are finding that it helps them to better connect with audiences, trends, and immediate marketplace fluctuations. More important to the organization's image and reputation, these leaders give voice, face, and personality to a major corporation, and that equates to enhanced trust and connection with essential audiences.



Looking into the future of an organization's only strategy, Gibson's advice—using the online tools of Web 2.0—includes:

- **Accept that we all are doing business in a new world. The landscape has changed. Doing business today requires a sense of transparency and new ways of engaging customers, employees, stakeholders, and other important audiences.**
- **Adapt technology to extend your distinct needs. Business-to-business, business-to-consumers, not-for-profits, government, NGOs... customize online communications and the tools of Web 2.0 to achieve your own unique voice and brand image.**
- **Listen, watch, and monitor what's out there online about your organization. Recognize that what might be said about your organization on a social networking site, such as Facebook, might impact everything from recruiting new employees to brand image.**
- **Actively practice storytelling to bring your organization's messages and communications to life.**

Cisco has changed the way it makes news, and in the process has enhanced its global reputation as a responsible corporate citizen and thought-leader. Learn more about it [here \(http://newsroom.cisco.com/dlls/index.html\)](http://newsroom.cisco.com/dlls/index.html).

Here's the risky, and the good part

Leadership online requires some risk. There is the probability of using online communications tools your colleagues, employees and competitors have never heard of, and might, at first, consider to be a waste of time. There is the reality of learning that not everyone loves your personality or your organization. But, there is also the direct chance of turning around a negative opinion, making friends and maybe, winning new business.

Executive blogging and utilizing online social media tools requires an investment of time and attention in order to establish a conversation of credibility with audiences. It is not to be delegated if you wish to achieve any level of trust and candor. An executive can never hope to build a dialogue with customers by posting on a blog every couple of months. Becoming active online is a near-daily discipline of not only expressing opinion, but also of listening, establishing conversation, and, most of all, not selling or promoting.

The rise of social media and Web 2.0 presents is a strategic advantage for companies to better communicate, engage, collaborate, respond to today's opportunities... and to be viewed as a leader.

Knowledge of how to leverage and utilize the rapid convergence of communications, information, and Web 2.0 technologies will define tomorrow's leaders.

The least you need to know

It's worth repeating... 5 steps to take control, and become a media savvy leader during these challenging times, and into the future:

1. **Develop personal and trusted media contacts**
2. **Communicate through captivating storytelling and memorable messages**
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5. **Get involved in conversations online with customers, prospects and stakeholders**



Here's the benefit...

News in today's world is reported literally every minute, 'round the clock, via the traditional channels of newspapers, wire services, magazines, television, and radio—but also through Web sites, social networking sites online, blogs, and an ever-increasing variety of online social media sources that are evolving in today's digital revolution.

Despite the diversity of today's types of media, the most effective communications comes down to getting to know the right journalists and what they need to do their jobs, understanding what is news and what isn't, and working together with reporters on a professional and trusted level to provide the background information, facts, and interviews they need to make stories happen.

Today's executives and corporate leaders who communicate the unique vision of their organizations must be able to express enthusiasm and a meaningful story without sounding like publicists. Clear and credible stories in everyday plain language can be crafted and neatly tucked inside the context of legitimate news.

The competitive leadership and enhanced corporate or organizational value and influence that comes as a result of favorable and ongoing news media coverage can be the stuff of legends.

About the author

David Henderson is a veteran media and communications strategist, author, Emmy Award winning former CBS Network News correspondent, and adjunct professor. Based in Washington, D.C., he consults and leads workshops for organizations globally on effective communications for competitive leadership through the mainstream and Web 2.0 media.

His latest book “The Media Savvy Leader: Visibility, Influence and Results in a Competitive World” delivers practical and unvarnished insight and answers for business leaders on how to communicate through today’s changing media with clarity, transparency and authenticity. David is also author of “Making News: A Straight-Shooting Guide to Media Relations.”

David has lived and worked in New York, Tokyo, London and Hong Kong, and has counseled clients around the world. He lives in the Washington, D.C., area.

To learn more about David and his work, please visit:

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