"How to" – Marketing & Protecting Your Family Business

Thursday, September 18 | 8-10 a.m. | BerryDunn – 2211 Congress Street, Portland & Zoom

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Key Challenges in the Media Landscape

1. **Revenue & Financial Sustainability**
    - Advertising revenue is shrinking or shifting, especially for traditional outlets. Advertisers are moving toward digital, programmatic, social media and other formats, so competition is fiercer. Axios+3NetSuite+3Media Update+3
    - Subscription fatigue: many outlets are trying paywalls or subscriptions, but audiences are reluctant to pay for multiple services. Media Update+2Reuters+2
    - Costs are rising — production, acquisition of talent, technology, content rights, moderation. There are layoffs, budget cuts, newsrooms shrinking. Axios+3Media Update+3Cision+3
2. **Audience Fragmentation & Attention Competition**
    - Audiences are spread over many platforms (streaming, social media, podcasts, etc.) so it's harder to capture and retain attention. Media Update+4Fiveable+4Kadence+4
    - Newer formats (short video, influencer-led content, creator-driven media) are changing how people consume information and stories. Kadence+2Kadence+2
3. **Trust, Credibility, and Misinformation**
    - Misinformation/disinformation remains a big issue. Social media and algorithmic amplification make it easy for false or misleading content to spread rapidly. AP News+3Journalism & Mass Communication Hub+3Media Update+3
    - Audiences are increasingly suspicious, especially when AI is used in content production or in newsrooms. Concerns around bias, transparency, accountability. Kadence+3Reuters+3arXiv+3
4. **Technology Disruption & Ethical/Regulatory Implications**
    - AI and generative tools: offer efficiencies, new creative possibilities, but also raise ethical issues (plagiarism, deepfakes, copyright, etc.). Media Update+3Kadence+3arXiv+3

- Regulation & policy lag: laws/policies often trail behind technology. Questions about platform liability, content moderation, privacy, ownership, transparency of algorithms. AP News+2Axios+2

5. **Media Ownership, Consolidation, and Diversity**
    - Ownership is consolidating in many places, which can reduce plurality of voices or lead to editorial homogenization. Axios+2The Guardian+2
    - Local journalism is under severe stress: many local papers have closed or cut back drastically. This leads to "news deserts," less oversight in many communities. TV Tech+3Access the Agency+3Media Update+3
6. **Workforce & Talent**
    - Hiring and retaining talent is harder: cost pressures mean lower pay, layoffs; tech-skills are increasingly needed; competition is not just among media outlets but from tech firms. NetSuite+1
    - Freelancers and independent journalists are especially vulnerable: lower compensation, less stability, fewer resources. Cision+1
7. **Pace, Pressure, and Quality**
    - Demand for speed (breaking news, real-time updates, social media) can undercut verification and depth. Media Update
    - Pressure to produce content that gets high engagement can favor sensational, click-bait-type stories, or ones that confirm existing biases. Kadence+2Media Update+2
8. **Platform Power & Algorithmic Gatekeeping**
    - Social media platforms, search engines, aggregators have huge control over distribution, visibility, reach. Their algorithmic decisions impact what content people see — often in opaque ways. AP News+3Media Update+3Kadence+3
    - These platforms also bear increasing regulatory scrutiny and reputational risk. How they moderate content, how algorithms prioritize, privacy issues etc. AP News+2

Why Family-Owned Businesses Need Proactive PR Strategies

1. Protecting the Family Name & Reputation

- **Your brand is personal** — a family name is often tied directly to the business, so a reputational hit can affect both the company and the family's standing in the community.
- Proactive PR helps control the narrative, especially during crises (e.g., disputes, succession issues, controversies).

2. Managing Succession & Leadership Transitions

- Leadership changes in family businesses can be emotionally charged and closely watched by stakeholders.
- A good PR strategy communicates continuity, stability, and vision during transitions — reassuring employees, investors, and customers.

3. Showcasing Values & Legacy

- Family businesses often have strong values (heritage, trust, community ties).
- PR can amplify this story, differentiate the brand, and build customer loyalty by highlighting the company's history and commitment to long-term success rather than short-term gains.

4. Attracting Talent & Partners

- Some candidates and partners may worry about nepotism or limited growth opportunities.
- A strategic PR plan can position the company as professional, innovative, and open to diverse talent and collaboration.

5. Navigating Sensitive Issues

- Family conflicts, financial decisions, or public disputes can quickly become media stories.
- Proactive PR includes crisis planning and media training to handle sensitive issues before they escalate.

6. Competing with Big Corporations

- Large corporations often have entire communications teams shaping public perception.

- A proactive PR approach helps a family-owned business punch above its weight — gaining visibility, building thought leadership, and staying competitive.

7. Supporting Growth & Expansion

- When entering new markets, acquiring other companies, or going public, consistent messaging is critical.
- PR helps communicate the company's vision, culture, and strengths clearly to new audiences.

8. Digital & Social Media Reputation Management

- A single viral post can damage a family brand.
- Ongoing monitoring and engagement through proactive PR protects the business against misinformation and negative publicity.