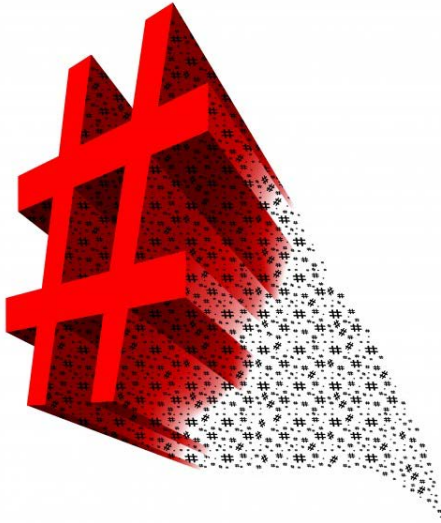


# The Hashtag That Sells

**Creating multiple opportunities for guests to get on their social media feeds and talk about you organically is key to engagement.**

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Embracing agility in public relations doesn't have to mean throwing out tried-and-true tactics. Stunts and events, for example, have long been popular ways to get attention and engagement for brands, and they become agile tactics when PR practitioners integrate social messaging throughout. On their own, they can sometimes be reactive or seem compartmentalized, but they have a valuable role to play when they can engage their audience far beyond the one-off moment (as long as it's all done well).

We live in a hyper-connected, always-on world, so this stream of social messaging is a must in order to extend the reach of a brand's story. Creating multiple opportunities for guests—and brand fans who might not be physically able to participate—to get on their social media feeds and talk about you organically is key to engagement.

Creating just the right hashtag is critical. Hashtags are now ubiquitous and, honestly, de rigueur for brand social conversations. At Havas PR, we have devised a set of succinct guidelines to follow to make yours stand out and work hard for your client:

1. **#shortandsweet.** Ideally, the hashtag will be three words max, for a total of no more than 10 characters. Make sure Twitter users can include it while still being able to write adequate content within the allotted 140 characters.
1. **#nocompetition.** Create the hashtag around the topic you want people talking about. Make it unique enough that it sparks conversation.
1. **#easyreader.** Be sure the hashtag is easy to read. That means no double letters, no commonly misspelled words and no grammatical mistakes. Beware of inadvertent puns or double entendres.
1. **#memorable.** Catchy is good.

Once you've decided on the hashtag, place it prominently—and early. Highlight it on the event invitations to prime participants to begin talking about it. And of course feature the hashtag prominently at the event. Also at the event, set up Instagram-inspired photo booths and provide other opportunities to check in when guests arrive. Don't be afraid to have fun with this; keeping your guests entertained will boost their engagement levels.

Integrating all this messaging into your event will help create instant buzz. But don't go hashtag-happy. One strong hashtag is better than frantically over-tagging your posts. It's like most things in life: Play it cool; you don't want to look like you're trying too hard.

It's also important to note that it's not just about a slew of comments and hashtags appearing on social media platforms; it's about inspiring real (and positive) exchanges. Be sure to have a brand ambassador or two at the ready to respond in real time to Twitter rants or online negativity of any sort, and to answer questions or express gratitude for shout-outs.

In short: Plan ahead, play around (with hashtags and at the event) and seize your brand's moment.