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PRBI™ Survey Predicts Optimistic Forecast for Boutique PR Firms in 2012

The Power of Social Media, Especially Its Role in the Middle East Political Upheavals, Cited as the Year's Major Communication Event

New York (January 11, 2011) - Respondents to a new [PR Boutiques International™](#) (PRBI) survey of worldwide boutique public relations agencies predict moderate to high growth for their businesses in 2012, a reflection of the increasing recognition that these specialized firms deliver real value in a challenging economy.

PRBI, a worldwide collaborative network of firms, includes 32 agencies operating in 13 countries, spanning the globe from Argentina to South Korea. Members of PRBI represent companies ranging from international conglomerates to Fortune 500, trade associations, and fast growing firms in industries such as technology, energy, financial services, government, tourism, education, lifestyle and healthcare.

"The boutique PR firm is more appealing than ever to clients because our structure and senior expertise yields results," said PRBI president Bill Cowen, CEO of Metrospective Communications, Philadelphia, Pa. "Today companies need insightful and accurate advice, superb execution, and flexibility to adapt to constantly changing conditions, which is exactly the value proposition that our members provide."

How [social media helped to incite the revolutions in the Middle East](#) was tapped by respondents as the biggest milestone in 2011 that proves the power of PR, followed by the heightened public hype and awareness around the technology world (including [the death of Steve Jobs](#)) and the use of social media to help turn [Occupy Wall Street](#) into a global phenomenon tied for second.

All member agencies responding to the PR Boutiques International™ (PRBI) survey reported that their confidence level about the business environment was either medium (72 percent) or high (28 percent), while 78 percent predicted moderate growth in 2012. Two out of three reported that the perceived value of the PR boutique has increased during the economic recession, because companies see that they get more value for their investment (38 percent) and clients value the hands-on role of senior, experienced practitioners (38 percent).

The power of social media was cited by 44 percent of respondents as the major trend impacting communications in 2012, followed by the economic recession and its impact on spending (33 percent). The difficulty of telling a company story in a crowded marketplace was voted the biggest communication challenge that clients face in the coming year. Conversely the most significant opportunity facing companies today lies in telling that story through engaging, compelling media and channels, including the strategic use of social media.

Rather than predicting that social media will be the PR “magic bullet” for all clients, PRBI members instead view it as a tool that must be powered by engaging content and strategically integrated into the enterprise’s communication program.

“The cost effectiveness of PR, and the ability of senior practitioners like PRBI members to devise the best way to tell a compelling story in a crowded marketplace, is a key differentiator going forward and the reason why we are optimistic about 2012,” concluded Cowen.

About PR Boutiques International:

[PR Boutiques International](http://www.prboutiques.com)™ (PRBI) is an international network of boutique public relations firms. The principals of member firms are experienced practitioners who have held senior positions in large PR agencies and/or corporations but now put service first and work directly with clients. PRBI member firms excel in meeting a huge range of client needs in a large number of industries, including corporate public relations, consumer PR, health care PR, investor relations, crisis management, business-to-business PR, economic development PR, not-for-profit, academia, government, financial, technology, legal, multicultural and international PR and investor relations. Member practitioners have won the highest levels of professional awards, with qualifications ranging from Ph.D.s to former top journalists. They also represent memberships in the most noteworthy international public relations and business associations. For more information, visit <http://www.prboutiques.com>.

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