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These are more than just words to express appreciation for a job well done. The success of a conference or other collaborative effort depends on the full creative commitment of our partners, sponsors and exhibitors, many of whom are also longtime PRSA colleagues.

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As 2023 PRSA Chair, I have had the opportunity to participate in a host of PRSA and PRSSA events, and at each and every one I have been impressed and enormously gratified by the cooperative efforts to ensure our members received the educational, networking and social experiences they have come to expect.

Public relations professionals thrive on the relationships they build, and our relationship with you means a great deal. Thank you for working closely with us; your support is never taken for granted, and is essential every step of the way.

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#### See What These Industry Leaders Predict

The hot topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is front and center when industry experts examine how the world of PR and communications professionals may evolve in 2024. Check out what these leading executives expect to see in the coming months and their recommendations for implementing the latest tools.

**Carrie Parker**, Chief Marketing Officer at Cision, warns, "Teams that are hesitant to lean into AI-enabled solutions and intelligence to shape their brand narrative can be sure that their competitors won't be. In 2024, deploying advanced, data-driven communications strategies will be critical to staying competitive. As AI-enabled solutions have advanced, so have the ability for communications professionals to assess trends more effectively, understand audience sentiment on deeper levels, and make more informed, proactive moves based on what the data is telling them."

"The need for mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and the publics we serve has never been greater," believes **Tara L. Smith, M.S., APR,** director of the Online M.A. in Strategic Communication at the University of Delaware. "To be effective public relations practitioners in 2024, we need to learn how to think beyond the trends of the moment and hold ourselves accountable to question more than to simply provide the answers. The tools we use will continue to evolve, but our commitment to ethical communication is the one constant that should never change."

"Amidst elections, economic flux and global instability, strategic, thoughtful and ethical communication will be crucial," points out **Jessica M. Graham, APR, Fellow PRSA**, founder & CEO of Fionix Consulting. "CEOs will continue to navigate conflicting demands from employees and customers amid a polarizing media landscape. I hope that ethical practitioners will cement their seats at the table as trusted counselors. Junior positions will shift toward communication engineering roles. With the increase in AI, the industry will see accelerated changes, further blending communication and marketing functions. I predict an exciting year!"

"In 2024, we will continue to advance the rapidly evolving landscape of communications as we see artificial intelligence, interactive content and social media play a more significant role in our industry while underscoring the imperativeness of maintaining the foundational tenets of communication — truth, transparency and timeliness," says **Aileen Izquierdo**, director of the FIU School of Communication.

"2024 is set to put more strain on the public's sentiment towards institutions, with trust in government, media and business plummeting," predicts **Doug Male**, director of brand communications at Guinness World Records North America Inc. "As we face up to this, we recognize that the future of PR and comms will be shaped by AI, whether used to better understand and reach audiences or to increase efficiencies, the rise of AI can't be ignored. This is our greatest challenge for 2024 and beyond — how do we ensure trust remains central to comms strategy, while embracing these technologies."

"Artificial intelligence's (AI) role in public relations will continue growing, especially on the content development side," says **Jennifer Hammers**, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Issuer Direct. "People understand the importance of press release distribution but struggle to write their releases. This is where AI can provide support. That's why at Newswire, we developed Almee, our AI writing assistant and recommendation agent. Almee provides content support to our customers."

"The future of the public relations (PR) industry lies at the intersection of human creativity, strategic thinking and artificial intelligence (AI)," observes **David Rothstein**, CEO of Newsmatics. "In an ever-evolving landscape, powerful AI tools are reshaping storytelling and saving time for PR professionals. As AI evolves, ensuring safeguards and upholding core values become crucial to prevent potential negative consequences such as plagiarism and inaccuracies. Newsmatics is at the forefront of the news tech industry, combating misinformation, labeling sources and vetting content."

"In 2024, PR professionals will have access to increasingly sophisticated data analytics tools and insights about their target audience," says **Zack Jenkins**, general manager, North America at Onclusive. "The industry has already been going through significant change with digitization and automation keeping PR professionals alerted 24/7 to relevant conversations for their brand from vast volumes of media content. In the same way,

Al-assisted solutions are set to provide much-needed help in time-consuming tasks such as data analysis and trend identification. PR professionals will benefit from increasingly high-performance social listening and media monitoring solutions, and can expect to be more knowledgeable, agile, and responsive to trends and issues."

"2024 could be a breakout year for several emerging immersive technologies that will change how we approach communication strategy," says **Donna Z. Davis,** Ph.D., director of the immersive media communication master's program at the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication. "In recent years, we've watched the inflated expectations of the metaverse plummet into the trough of disillusionment, a cycle that artificial intelligence (AI) is leaning into now. I believe we must keep a pulse on the multitude of technologies that can be used to reach audiences and achieve communication and organizational goals in increasingly powerful ways."

"In 2024, AI will continue to shake up communications as we know it," predicts **Aaron Kwittken**, founder/CEO of PRophet. "PR agencies and brands will gradually move from curiosity to widescale adoption. The AI hype cycle will stabilize, emphasizing predictive and protective capabilities during election season. GenAI will improve to a B- from a C+. Universities will integrate AI use cases into curriculums. Holding companies will invest in AI tools through partnerships and licensing. Enterprises will prioritize risk mitigation around copyright and indemnification through law firm and insurer partnerships."

"We surveyed PR professionals to gather insights and reflect on their 2023 and 2024 trend expectations," reports **Joanna Drabent**, co-founder & CEO of Prowly. "The results are straightforward: Twitter is no longer a PR essential. As we turn our gaze to 2024, AI in content creation is emerging as a dominant trend. Alongside this, data-driven PR and social responsibility are also gaining traction. In terms of budget allocation for 2024, the majority favor nurturing strategic partnerships."

"We live in tumultuous times — fueled by a pandemic, social injustice, environmental issues, -political instability, and negative geopolitical events," notes **Matt Charles**, Ph.D., APR, Graduate Lecturer at Purdue University's Brian Lamb School of Communication. "The emergence of AI can either exacerbate these through misinformation and misuse or help combat them through instantaneous knowledge gathering to advance stakeholder engagement. Buckle up — especially with the 2024 presidential election; we'll see what the next year brings."

"The future will be dominated by AI, and the PR industry is no exception," predicts **Daren Benzi**, CCO of TVEyes. "In this environment, it will be critical to have an audio and video intelligence partner leveraging AI to build smarter monitoring solutions, to move as fast and as accurately as possible, and to expand the universe of capabilities open to those of us who rely on audio and video content to make strategic, data-driven decisions."





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