



HFMA UPDATE

by Graham Keen,
Executive Director

One of the great pleasures of my job is to host the great programme of events that the HFMA organises, be it a CLEAR CHECK Labelling Workshop, a Brexit Conference, or a Regulatory Seminar. The latest of these events took place a couple of days ago, this time a Social Media Seminar at the iconic Museum of Brands in north-west London. If you have not yet visited this amazing museum, and if you are even remotely interested in the developments of brands, and in particular food brands, over the last century (which I am sure the majority of people reading this are), then do yourself a huge favour and go to see it.

The museum is the brainchild and personal collection of a man called Robert Opie, who, about 50 years ago, saw the need to unravel the fascinating story of how consumer products and promotion had evolved since Victorian times. By 1975, he had enough material to hold his own exhibition, *The Pack Age*, at the Victoria & Albert Museum. After a 16-year career in market research, he opened the first museum devoted to the history of packaging and advertising in Gloucester in 1984, and the museum moved to London in 2005 and then to its current location in 2015. The museum now features over 12,000 original items from the unique Robert Opie Collection.

Unlike most HFMA events, which by necessity are of a technical and regulatory nature, this seminar had a marketing focus. We are all acutely aware of the social media phenomenon, and we are all engaging in some way with it. Personally, I am towards one end of the spectrum, engaging with Facebook and LinkedIn but still stopping short of Twitter and the like. And many of you reading this are way ahead of me, either

for personal choice or that your job requires it of you, and some of you will be very advanced indeed. Nevertheless, we are all somewhere along that scale the attendees had quite a lot to learn during the course of the event.

How we communicate has very quickly changed beyond all recognition. How will you, your company and your brands' reputations be impacted, and how are you responding to this new paradigm? Unless you are living down a fairly large hole in the ground, I am pretty sure you and your colleagues have been giving this quite a bit of thought.

The day started with Pegasus PR's Social Media Consultant, Ellie Madgwick, who set the scene by laying out the social media landscape brilliantly, followed by a really informative explanation of the do's and don'ts, and what to look out for from Sumandeep Sohi of the Advertising Standards Authority. This was followed by Helen Gilbert, health writer for *The Sun*, *Daily Mail* and *The Grocer* and new author of blog *Relax Ya Self to Health*, who spoke extremely passionately about the rapidly changing environment for journalists and the less than encouraging prospects for the newspaper industry.

Duncan Mackenzie Reid, Head of Corporate Communications and Consumer Health at Pegasus PR, then gave an extremely insightful presentation into what can go wrong on social media, and just how quickly the problem can escalate. What used to be the critical 'golden hour' to respond, he explained, has now shrunk down to a 'golden 20 minutes'! We then had a lot of fun, split into groups, trying to respond to a notional online crisis in only 20 minutes, a really thought-provoking and somewhat scary exercise!

The agenda wound up with a presentation from Adam Hawkins, a Director at Takumi, followed by a Q&A session with a panel of four bloggers and vloggers, Amanda Fulton ('Ginger Mum'), Hannah Anderson ('Hannah and Fitness Blog'), Holly Daffurn ('Natural Mumma Magazine') and Andrew Barker ('PND Fitness Blog'). All of these speakers offered great insight into how we set about engaging properly with consumers via social media.

At the seminar, we also took the opportunity to present a new award. Each year, the HFMA presents two awards, the Health Journalist of the Year, most recently won by Jo Waters, and the industry's most prestigious annual award, the Maurice Hanssen Award of Honour, the most recent recipient of which was Lisa Bradley, the founder of Pegasus PR. At the event, we inaugurated a third award, the HFMA Blogger of the Year Award, and our Chair, Robert Taylor, announced the winner as Hazel Wallace, aka the 'Food Medic'. Hazel is a practicing doctor with a special interest in nutrition and lifestyle medicine, and a qualified personal trainer, and perfectly exemplifies the lifestyle our industry promotes. Hazel has hundreds of thousands of dedicated followers to her name, and uses her considerable influence to educate consumers on the importance of food and natural remedies as the essential pillars of a healthy lifestyle. Hazel was on hand to receive the award from Robert, and gave a very gracious speech of thanks.

So, like I said, it was a huge pleasure for me to host the event and, like everyone there, I was



Hazel Wallace

hoping for some 'lightbulb' moments. On this front, I was not disappointed as I devoured what each speaker had to say. And my own lightbulb moments? Well, aside from knowing that I am one of Facebook's two billion users, it seems that one in every five minutes spent online is now spent on Facebook! Twitter's landmark move from its iconic 140 characters to 280 seems pretty significant, but I also added terms like 'thumb-stopping' and 'click-bait' to my vocabulary. But most of all, I learned just how quickly 20 minutes passes when you are under pressure!

Members of the HFMA can now access all of the presentations given in the members-only section of our new website, so I would encourage them all to go and take a look.

For further details, please contact philippa@hfma.co.uk.

To help us in our efforts to protect this industry and benefit from the gold-standard advice we provide, join the HFMA at the earliest opportunity. To learn more about our activities, please contact graham@hfma.co.uk.

HFMA membership is vital to ensure that your company keeps abreast of the fast-changing regulatory environment. The HFMA is the UK's best source of information and most effective defender of our industry's interests. To help the HFMA defend your business at this most critical time contact hfma@hfma.co.uk or call 020 8481 7100.

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