



## NettResults Public Relations Middle East

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### Contacts

Dubai:  
+971 4 331 1593

Abu Dhabi:  
+971 2 414 6788

Riyadh:  
+966 1 211 8103

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Dear Dianne,

Greetings from your Middle East public relations partner.

It's an interesting time in the Middle East with a number of commercial organizations announcing record sales and profits - regional dignitaries meeting world leaders - the [top 10 Arab Tweeters](#) being announced, oh, and is there still some problems in Libya?

Still the commercial wheels turn - with major deals being inked and smaller organizations moving into the region. Perhaps that's one of the great surprises of today's economy from our point of view. Today we are in talks with more international companies that are eyeing the Middle East as new markets than ever before.

What attracts these companies (that come from a broad mix of industries) to the region? Most probably the deep pockets of regional organizations (thanks to the continued rise of oil prices) and the high disposable income of so many of the expatriate and super-rich in the region. Stands to reason.

Need insightful PR partners that can find the opportunity in today's world?

How can NettResults help ?

Happy PRing,

## Why employee manuals need to be updated to save your organization's reputation

As the New York Times covered in April the R&B singer Chris Brown and his publicist parted ways on March 22, the same day Mr. Brown shattered the window of a dressing room during a violent tirade at "Good Morning America," photos of which were quickly posted online.

Eight days earlier, Gilbert Gottfried lost his job as the voice of the Aflac duck after a series of tsunami jokes on Twitter that his publicist now wishes the comic had run by him.

And Charlie Sheen's longtime publicist walked out in late February after the actor held forth in a series of multiplatform stream-of-consciousness rants that kept many agog for days.

Remember when a publicist was called a "press agent"? Now, to quote the legendary

Hollywood publicist Pat Kingsley, "suppress agent" might be a better term.

But there is a lesson for all of us to learn from these celebrities - one that is valuable to the corporate environment. In the new era of social media, any employee with a half-baked idea and a laptop - or any customer with a cellphone camera - can quickly undo years of careful image crafting.

Employee manuals have long demanded that employees refrain from speaking to reporters (and oh, how we wish all our clients had these simple policies in place), but now, more than ever, social media must be included in employee handbooks to discourage from posting anything on personal sites or blogs that could jeopardize the company's they are affiliated with.

Reputations can crumble in minutes. "The margin of error is slim when you go directly to the public," said Steve Honig, the publicist who works for Mr. Gottfried. "One comment can become a fiasco in 10 seconds."

That's what he said happened to his client, who is best known for his caustic and often inappropriate humor. On March 13, Mr. Gottfried posted a series of jokes about tsunami victims on his Twitter account. Mr. Honig said he first heard about it from reporters contacting him for comment. When he looked up the news online, he said he initially saw the postings mentioned 300 times. Seconds later it was 600 times and, within a few minutes, more than 1,000 times.

"You could watch it spread in real time," Mr. Honig said. Mr. Gottfried decided he wanted to apologize, the publicist said. But by then it was too late. Aflac, the insurance company that had hired him as a voice-over artist, fired him within 48 hours.

Don't let your employees or customers get you fired. Manage your social media just as seriously as you manage the media. It does the same thing and can just as quickly ruin you.

*For advice on how to update your corporate press and social media polices please do give us a call.*



## Country Profile - Lebanon

The UN has demanded the dismantling of all armed groups in Lebanon, including Palestinian militias and the military wing of Hezbollah, which controls much of southern Lebanon.

When Hezbollah militia seized two Israeli soldiers in a raid in July 2006, Israel responded with a 34-day military offensive and a blockade. Around 1,000 Lebanese, most of them civilians, were killed. The damage to civilian infrastructure was wide-ranging.



International peacekeepers were drafted in to help police a UN-brokered ceasefire. But Hezbollah's leader has rejected calls for the movement to disarm and political divisions in Beirut cloud the issue of what should be done about the group's military presence in the south.

With its high literacy rate and traditional mercantile culture, Lebanon has traditionally been an important commercial hub for the Middle East.

A small, mountainous country, Lebanon was under French mandate until independence in 1943. Its population is a mixture of Christian sects, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Druze and others, having been a refuge for the region's persecuted minorities.

Government structures are divided between the various groups. Lebanon has also seen several large influxes of Palestinian refugees, most of whom have limited legal status.

From 1975 until the early 1990s Lebanon suffered a bloody civil war in which regional powers - particularly Israel, Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organisation - used the country as a battlefield for their own conflicts.

Syria exerts considerable political clout in Lebanon, although it withdrew its troops in 2005, ending a 29-year military presence.

This followed the assassination in Beirut of former prime minister Rafik Hariri. Lebanese groups then in opposition accused Syria of involvement; Damascus denied the charge. Huge pro- and anti-Syria rallies were held in Beirut, triggering the government's downfall and the Syrian pullout. The Hariri case appeared to have taken a major step forward on 1 March 2009 when an international court into the killing opened in the Hague.

By autumn 2010, the issuing of indictments over the Hariri killing was thought to be imminent, raising fears that if the UN-led tribunal accuses the Syrian- and Iranian-backed militant Shia group Hezbollah of involvement in his murder, this could spark off a new round of sectarian conflict.

Syrian troops moved in shortly after the war started. Israeli troops invaded in 1978 and again in 1982 before pulling back to a self-declared "security zone" in the south from which they withdrew in May 2000.

### **A little about the media we work with in Lebanon...**

Lebanon's broadcasting scene is well-developed, lively and diverse, reflecting the country's pluralism and divisions.

It was the first Arab country to permit private radio and television stations. But the government has a say over who may operate stations and whether or not they can broadcast news. Several stations are owned by leading politicians.

Press freedom body Reporters Without Borders says the media have more freedom in Lebanon than in any other Arab country, but nevertheless face "political and judicial machinations".

Most broadcasters were set up after the civil war by Muslim and Christian factions. Commercial operators Future TV and LBC attract the lion's share of the viewing audience. Take-up of satellite and cable TV is widespread.

Al-Manar TV, backed by the militant group Hezbollah, has aroused controversy. A French court banned the station's satellite channel in 2004 on grounds of anti-Semitism, and it has also been banned in Spain, Germany and the United States. The station was targeted by Israeli air raids during military operations against Hezbollah in 2006.

There are dozens of private radio stations. Broadcasts from BBC Arabic and Radio

France Internationale are carried by partner stations.

Criticism of officials and policies is carried daily in dozens of newspapers and hundreds of periodicals. While there are no censorship laws, restrictions in press laws forbid the media from defaming the president or other heads of state and from inciting sectarian strife.

By June 2010, Lebanon had around 1 million internet users (Internetworldstats.com). OpenNet Initiative says Lebanon is one of very few countries in the Middle East where it has found no evidence of technical filtering.

#### Press

- An-Nahar - private daily
- Al-Safir - private daily
- Al-Anwar - private daily
- Al-Mustaqbal - pro-Hariri daily
- Al-Diyar - private daily
- L'Orient-Le Jour - in French
- The Daily Star- in English



#### Television

- Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC)
- Future TV - commercial; channels comprise Future International, Future News and Future TV USA; owned by Hariri family
- Tele-Liban
- Al-Manar (The Beacon) TV - pro-Hezbollah

#### Radio

- Voice of Lebanon - established commercial station- commercial
- Radio Liban - state-run
- Sawt al-Ghad (Voice of Tomorrow) - commercial
- Radio One - commercial

#### News agency

- Lebanese National News Agency - state-run

## Media in the Middle East...

### New English radio station for Oman

A new English-language radio station - Merge 104.8 - is due to launch in Oman in May. The station seeks to target 18-40 year-olds in the Sultanate with a mix of entertainment and local content, and is owned by Sabco Media which launched Al Wisal as an independent Arabic station in 2008. Former Dubai-based presenter Chris Fisher joins the new station as Programme Director, and will also present its breakfast show.



### Parenting magazine launched by CPI





A magazine covering parenting and childcare has been launched by Corporate Publishing International (CPI). Mother, Baby & Child is published monthly and covers all aspects of childcare - from conception and pregnancy through to early schooling.

The Dubai-based magazine is headed editorially by Dominique Pechuela-Famador.

### New luxury fashion and lifestyle magazine



A luxury magazine covering fashion and lifestyle has been launched by Dubai-based HS Media Group. MOJEH Magazine is described as an 'elite coffee table magazine' and also covers accessories, culture and travel.

The English-language, bi-monthly title is headed editorially by Mojeh Izadpanah as Editor-in-Chief.

### Weekly newspaper to target Filipino community



Kabayan Weekly, a tabloid-sized newspaper targeting the Filipino community in the UAE is due to launch on May 10. The 32-page paper will be published on Thursdays by Dubai-based Al Hilal Printing and Publishing Services with a launch circulation of 40,000 copies.

Ria Mendoza will be the Managing Editor.

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NettResults International Public Relations | PO Box 72587 | Dubai | United Arab Emirates