

The top half of the cover features several overlapping circles of varying sizes. Each circle contains a different abstract pattern, primarily consisting of curved, wavy lines in shades of red, pink, and white against a dark blue background. The patterns vary in orientation and density, creating a dynamic and modern aesthetic.

A GUIDE TO TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL PR

IN SIX EASY-TO-READ CHAPTERS





PMW

HELLO

Welcome to PMW, and thank you for downloading our guide to traditional and digital PR.

PR, public relations, communications, media outreach... whatever you call it, you should never underestimate its potential to persuade, inform and inspire.

Over the last 20 years, the PR world (along with the rest of the world) has been transformed by the rise of digital media. With many new PR firms setting up as digital-only, traditional PR in many companies has sadly fallen by the wayside. And, with so many new marketing methods available, many businesses are questioning whether PR still has a place at all.

We know that it does. A well-thought-out PR campaign can boost awareness, build your brand, and position you as a leader in your field. Our established PR team is led by managers who each have more than 20 years' experience as PR practitioners, working with some of the largest (and smallest) brands in the country.

This eBook contains everything you need to know about traditional and digital public relations, and whether traditional PR still has a place in our online world (spoiler: they both still have a place in most marketing plans). You'll also get a guide to media relations, measuring PR impact and planning an effective strategy for your business or clients.

The good news is the possibilities of PR have never been greater. So, sit back, and let us take you on a journey through the world of traditional and digital PR.

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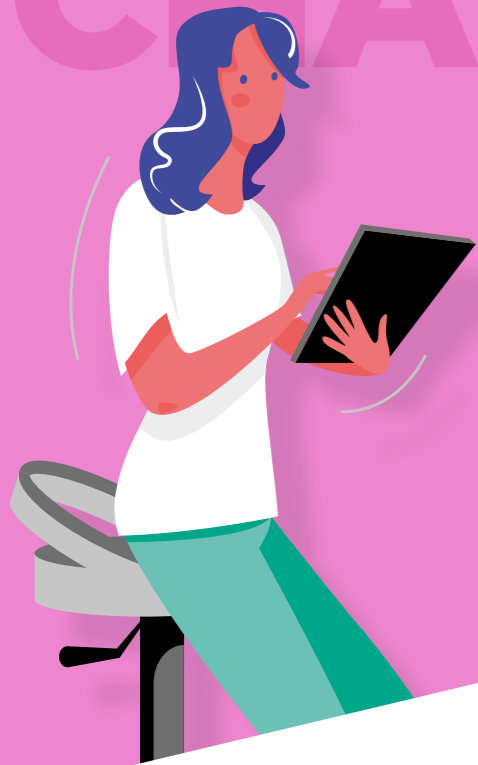
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CHAPTER 1.



WHAT IS PR?

If you're a seasoned PR pro, you will already have your own view of what PR is and how it works. If you're studying, just starting out in a junior PR role, or you're a company owner who's never invested in communications, then you might be wondering "what exactly is PR, and why should businesses be doing it?" Whoever you are, if you're looking for a good grounding then keep reading. We present: PMW's whistle-stop tour of the world of PR.

FIRST STOP? THE HISTORY OF PR

The idea of using communications to influence the public sphere has been around for centuries.

In Ancient Greece, Aristotle and Plato were among the classical philosophers who wrote on the art of rhetoric and its power to help public speakers persuade the people. Fast forward through history and public campaigners for causes such as the Abolitionist movement and Women's Suffrage used leaflets, posters, articles, speeches and public stunts to build momentum and sway public sentiment in favour of their cause.

PR as a profession only emerged in the 20th century, and it is now an established industry in its own right. However, at its core, the goal of PR today is the same as any persuasive communication through time: to direct people's thinking and maintain a positive reputation.

Directing people's thinking might sound a bit scary, but when you use PR responsibly it can glean great results for all sectors: established businesses, charities, start-ups and not-for-profit organisations.

WHAT IS THE POINT OF PR?

PR is about creating stories. It's getting your name out there so people know who you are, what you're doing and how great you are.

Without a solid PR campaign, you are allowing others to write the story of your brand. Investing in PR means that you can lead the narrative of your brand and control how you are seen in the public imagination.

Think about how you feel about any company. Any good and bad stories you have heard - that's down to PR, or the lack of it.

Unlike advertising, PR's main goal is to get independent sources to endorse your organisation - essentially, it's about getting someone else to say how great you are. This enhances **trust** in the key message. This quote describes it pretty well:

“”

"If a man tells his date how handsome, smart and successful he is - that's advertising. If the man tells his date she's intelligent, looks lovely, and is a great conversationalist, he's saying the right things to the right person and that's marketing. If someone else tells the woman how handsome, smart and successful her date is - that's PR."

S. H. Simmons

**The moral is:
never underestimate
the power of a well-run
PR campaign.**

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR STORY OUT THERE?

The major vessel that brings your PR messages to the public is the media.

Media comes in many different forms. Before the explosion of the web, the primary vehicle for getting your story out there was the traditional media. But that's all changed with the rise of the internet, and the boom in digital media platforms.

Let's look at the common media channels that are used in traditional and digital PR:

TRADITIONAL MEDIA CHANNELS

- > Newspapers
- > Television
- > Radio
- > Magazines
- > Events
- > Conferences

VS

DIGITAL MEDIA CHANNELS

- > Online magazines and news outlets
- > Social media
- > Influencer marketing
- > Blogs and forums
- > Podcasts
- > Webinars

PR is a media-led industry. The reason that PR has changed over the last 20 years is because the media has changed, and PR practitioners have found new and exciting ways to get their message out there. Digital media brings with it new objectives, **new ways to measure your impact**, and **new requirements when planning your strategy**.

However, that doesn't mean that traditional media should be ignored - it's all about considering where your audience is, what is right for your brand, and what you want to achieve.

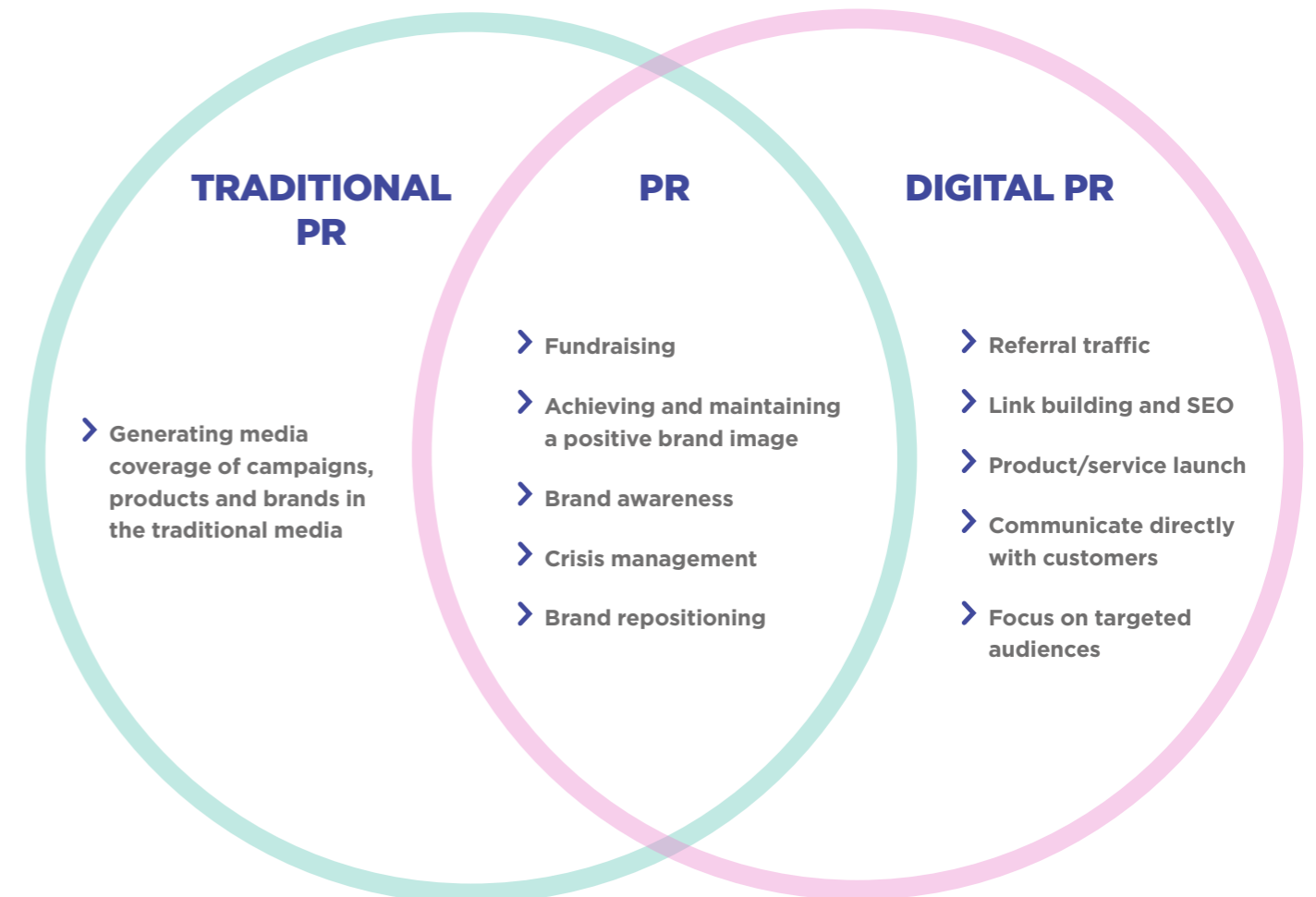
WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF PR?

The primary goal of both digital and traditional PR is building awareness of your brand's key messages and maintaining a positive reputation. However, there are other specific goals that a campaign may aim to reach.

It's important to remember that not every campaign will address every objective. In fact, it's important to set specific, laser-targeted goals (we'll get onto that later).

We've created a handy infographic to illustrate the objectives of traditional and digital PR, and how they overlap.

PR OBJECTIVES



THE HEART OF PR

Digital media has greatly expanded what PR can do - not least bringing incredible advances in our ability to measure PR's impact. Traditional media still has an enduring place in our culture, and remains a trustworthy and prestigious source of news and entertainment for millions of people every day. When used together, traditional and digital media can complement one another and build more momentum than either could alone.

A good PR strategy will have a sharp focus on what is right for your business and your audience - the beating heart of any campaign should be a great brand and its unique story.

CHAPTER 2.

EXAMINING TRADITIONAL PR

Many PR companies setting up today are specialising purely in digital PR. We love digital PR, but we also strongly believe that traditional PR should not be overlooked - that's because we know its power to get great results for our clients.

Achieving coverage in the traditional media can really boost the reputation of your brand. Not to mention that most audiences still interact with multiple forms of traditional media every day, so it's still a great way to reach potential customers.

Building positive awareness is traditional PR's *raison d'être*. But it's not just about marketing your product or service - you need to market yourself as a brand.

Businesses that don't cultivate a positive reputation by showing their brand's story to the world risk being seen as faceless and unapproachable. This can impact sales and leave you lagging behind your competitors.

The goal is to show your business' personality, values and ethics. What is it that you contribute to improve your customers' lives, and what is the unique thing you can offer them? This helps people connect with your brand and what you stand for.

This chapter will give you a grounding in traditional PR, as well as some tips and tricks from experienced practitioners with years of industry work to their name.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Traditional media encompasses any way we receive communications, broadly news and entertainment, before the rise of the internet. In the public relations industry, not all traditional media coverage is made equal. It is useful to categorise coverage into paid, owned and earned media.

PAID MEDIA

Coverage which you have to pay for - this is essentially advertising.

- Advertising space in magazines and newspapers
- Commercial radio and TV ad slots
- Paid reviews, advertorials and product placement in newspapers, magazines, TV and commercial radio

OWNED MEDIA

This is any media owned by the organisation themselves, through which they can promote their services, products and brand.

- Company magazines
- Whitepapers/eBooks
- Social media
- Company website

EARNED MEDIA

Earned media is free coverage of your brand from third party media (i.e. not owned by the organisation). Most of your PR work will be aimed towards achieving earned coverage.

- Expert articles in print media
- Magazine features
- Product reviews in newspapers and magazines
- Mentions in industry publications
- Speaking opportunities at events
- TV and radio coverage

In traditional PR, going after earned media is generally considered the best and most cost-effective tactic to boost your brand awareness, so any good strategy will focus its attention here. However, the name 'earned media' didn't come from nowhere; it takes time, hard work, consistency, and quality content to earn this type of coverage.



ACHIEVING EARNED MEDIA COVERAGE

The traditional media has a wealth of opportunities for achieving earned media coverage. Newspapers, magazines, TV and radio are all full of PR content. Many media offices have faced big staff cutbacks since the rise of digital media. This means that many publications and broadcasts rely on high-quality PR material more than ever before to reach their deadlines and provide great content to their audiences.

However, coverage doesn't come from nowhere. To achieve traditional earned media coverage, you need to:

- **Build relationships with the media**
- **Create a newsworthy moment - something that will capture the public's interest and imagination**
- **Provide an insightful contribution to a current issue**

If you think that there is nothing newsworthy about your brand, think again! Every brand has a story to tell. A PR practitioner's job is to be the storyteller, coming up with creative and exciting ways to make your brand appeal to the media. Here are some of our tips on how to create newsworthy stories that will make the media, and your potential customers, sit up and take notice:

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Doing something to help local communities and engage real people with your brand is one of the best ways to build a positive reputation for your brand. Think McDonald's Fun Football Centres, or Tesco's 'Pop to your local if you can' campaign, which encouraged people to support their local pubs post-lockdown, rather than buy beer from the supermarket.

- **Look for sponsorship opportunities, e.g. a local sports team**
- **Take part in charitable fundraising**
- **Donate materials/items to local projects**
- **Launch a competition or awards scheme**

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Keep on top of developments in your industry and weigh in on the issues that relate to your brand. This is particularly effective for B2B businesses, but it also works for B2C. Lean into your niche and speak up about what you stand for and what you know.

- **Write a thought leadership article offering an original point of view on a current issue**
- **Apply for speaking opportunities e.g. at industry conferences**
- **Conduct original research and tell your audience something new**
- **Collaborate with other thought leaders**

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

When your product is reviewed or endorsed by the media it adds to your visibility and increases customer trust. Ideally, you want to get the media to review your product for free, so make sure you present it to journalists with an angle that shows why it is of interest to their audience.

- **Send your product for free to journalists and stylists**
- **Offer up your product as a competition prize**
- **Reach out for celebrity endorsements**

MEDIA RELATIONS

It's essential to develop a good working relationship with journalists and other media professionals in order to secure independent, third-party editorial. Journalists need a consistent stream of news, so well-written PR content that is relevant to their audience will be welcomed.

- **Build relationships with journalists**
- **Read the publications you want to feature in and get to know their audience**
- **Keep up with the news and any events that may relate to your brand**
- **Get familiar with publications' schedules and lead times**

IT DOESN'T STOP THERE

We like to say that earned media earns more earned media.

When you do it right, earned media will lead to further opportunities for your brand...

- **Journalists commissioning an exclusive article**
- **Spokesperson approached for further comment or interview**
- **Panellist and speaking opportunities**
- **Further products being asked for review or placement**
- **Opportunities to attend industry events**

Head to **Chapter 4, 'A Guide to Media Relations'** for more advice on building media relationships.



CHAPTER 3.

A DEEP-DIVE INTO DIGITAL PR

New media channels have brought opportunities for new types of coverage, and new ways of engaging with audiences. Digital PR is any public relations activity that takes place on digital media channels - that's any media channel that's hosted online. Pretty simple so far.

Unlike traditional PR, which is primarily concerned with building buzz, brand awareness and a positive reputation, digital PR has a second branch of objectives: strengthening your website's SEO profile and driving referral traffic through link building.

Digital PR agencies are now a thriving and essential aspect of the public relations sector. For employees just starting out in the industry, digital PR might be the only thing they learn.

We've been there from the very beginning of digital PR, and are experts in both digital and traditional disciplines.

TYPES OF DIGITAL MEDIA

The digital media landscape has similarities with traditional media; however, there are also many marked differences. Platforms such as social media, for instance, are a concept that's entirely born in the digital world. With that said, it's still useful to look at digital PR activity through the lens of paid, owned and earned media.

PAID MEDIA

- Paid social media advertising
- Google Ads and Pay-Per-Click (PPC)
- Sponsored influencer content (don't overlook micro-influencers, they can have a big impact in a small niche)

OWNED MEDIA

- Organic social media
- Website blogs
- Email newsletters
- Digital magazines
- Digital whitepapers/eBooks
- Podcasts
- Webinars

EARNED MEDIA

- Expert articles/outreach articles featured in online publications
- Mentions in online industry news
- Speaking opportunities in industry webinars and podcasts
- Positive reviews on platforms such as Trustpilot, Google Reviews, Tripadvisor etc.
- Praise from customers on social media
- High rankings on search engines
- Unpaid influencer marketing

OWNED MEDIA IN DIGITAL PR

Digital owned media can reach a massive audience - think social media pages, blogs, websites and email marketing. One of the biggest things that sets digital PR apart from traditional PR is the opportunity to use owned media to build your online presence and gain earned media.

HOW TO USE OWNED MEDIA IN YOUR PR STRATEGY

WEBSITE BLOGS

A thriving blog section that demonstrates your industry expertise and passion for your brand can be an invaluable addition to a website. Your blogs can be targeted at current customers, or potential new customers, but always discuss a topic that will be interesting, relevant, or helpful for your intended reader. It's also a good idea to include your key SEO search terms.

Having an informative and thoughtful blog section on your website can position you as a leader in your field, drive new traffic to your website and strengthen your website's SEO profile (Google likes sites that frequently upload new content).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Your social media accounts offer a brilliant opportunity to use owned media to generate brand awareness and interact directly with your customers by:

- Posting engaging organic content
- Sharing your knowledge
- Involving your staff
- Sharing or reposting customer reviews
- Talking directly with customers in your comments section
- Creating hashtags and competitions
- Interacting with viral trends (but be picky, only jump on a trend if it really resonates with your brand)

One of the most common questions we get asked is "Can you make us go viral?". We've discovered that there's no real formula for this, but our viral posts have always hit on something that really resonates with the public. If your owned media does go viral, it can lead to a huge boost in earned media from other social media accounts, online magazines, journals and news outlets.



DIGITAL WHITEPAPERS, EBOOKS & MAGAZINES

Creating free digital resources available to download is another great way to provide useful content to your audience and build your reputation as a brand who really cares about helping its customers. Ask for an email address as a prerequisite for download if you're looking to build your email database.

ACHIEVING EARNED MEDIA

You can achieve digital earned media with many of the same tactics discussed in the traditional PR section. Community relations, thought leadership and product placement are still great ways to create stories about your brand - but a digital PR strategy means you will be reaching out to online platforms, rather than the traditional media, to get coverage. Here are some of the methods professional PRs use to achieve earned digital coverage:

- Distribute press releases and expert articles to online media outlets
- Reach out to influencers and bloggers for product placement opportunities
- If you have conducted a community outreach project, interact with participants on social media, share their positive posts on your own feed or in your stories
- Conduct community outreach within an online community, e.g. your social media followers
- Reach out to podcast and webinar hosts to offer your expertise and build your reputation as a thought leader

#OWNED MEDIA

USING DIGITAL PR TO ACHIEVE YOUR SEO OBJECTIVES

The ability to use digital PR to achieve your SEO and web objectives is something that really sets it apart from traditional PR.

If you're not in the know, SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation. Google can be a fickle friend, but it's essential to make sure Google likes you if you want your site to be a success. That's where SEO expertise comes in: it's the process of ensuring your business is found online by the right audience. If you rely on your website to deliver new business, whether through online sales or lead generation, then your PR content should be supporting your SEO goals.

Here are our tips:

IF YOUR OBJECTIVE IS

Link building:

- › Embed links to your website into press releases and outreach articles
- › Make your links relevant to the content they are included in
- › Include multiple links in each article. We recommend 2-6, depending on the length of your content
- › Make sure you're distributing your content to outlets that leave your links intact (it's fine to distribute to outlets that tend to remove links too, just make sure they don't account for all your distributions)

Achieving link backs on third party sites strengthens the authority of your website.

IF YOUR OBJECTIVE IS

Referral traffic:

- › Add your links to phrases that will entice the reader and make them want to find out more, e.g. "the importance of alcohol-free skincare" rather than "skincare brand, NaturalSkin"
- › Don't just link to the homepage - links to service pages will take the reader straight to in-depth, relevant information about what you offer

Referral traffic is any traffic that comes to your website from another website. The key is to embed natural links in quality content.

IF YOUR OBJECTIVE IS

Being found by the people who are searching for you:

- › Conduct keyword research to identify keywords that your audience is actively searching for
- › Use keywords in your written PR content wherever it is relevant (this is particularly important on your website blogs - the more well-used keywords on your site, the more SEO optimised it will be)
- › Let your PR content be guided by what your audience is searching for. It shows you what topics your potential customers are interested in. Plus, your content is more likely to be found through an organic search. The tool 'Answer the Public' can help you with this
- › BUT - don't be a slave to SEO! If you've hit upon a topic that no one is searching for yet, it doesn't mean you shouldn't write about it. You could be the first to create a buzz

Utilising keyword research complements both your SEO strategy and your PR content.



CHAPTER 4.

A GUIDE TO MEDIA RELATIONS

If you want to land the coverage your brand deserves, then you're going to need to have a plan. PR professionals now outnumber journalists five to one, so you need to stand out from the crowd to get your story noticed. That's where media relations comes in.

Getting the coverage you want hinges on how well you understand and communicate with media representatives. This applies to both traditional and digital PR.

Different media channels have different requirements. Within that you need to consider the requirement of different publications, varying lead times and deadlines, and even the habits of individual journalists. PR professionals have honed their ability to spin all these plates at once to ensure all their campaigns get the right coverage at the right time.



FINDING YOUR CORE FOCUS

When professional PRs get a new client, they will already have the contacts and expertise to target the right media channels and publications.

If you're a beginner launching your public relations from scratch, or you have a small budget, then it's best to begin by identifying a core focus – so it's time to get specific. This focus could be a group of five local print newspapers, ten bloggers or influencers, or three magazines.

It's up to you how ambitious you want to be; but beware of casting your net too wide in the beginning – your campaign will be more successful if you can target a few publications or channels really well.

So, how do you identify the core channels that will work for your brand? And how do you actually achieve coverage with them? Here is our guide to targeting the right media and generating coverage.

STEP ONE - THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

Know who you're trying to reach, and profile their media consumption habits. Do your target audience get most of their content online or are they likely to interact with print media? Do they listen to the radio on the way to work? Do they spend lots of time on social media? Do they work in a particular trade?

Here are some examples of the places where your audience might be engaging:

- Local/national magazines and newspapers (print and online)
- Local/national radio stations
- Social media
- YouTube
- Online blogs
- Industry/trade publications
- Conferences and events



STEP TWO - DO YOUR RESEARCH

Once you have thought about which media channels will best speak to your audience demographics, you can start narrowing your focus to individual publications, broadcasts, blogs and influencers. If you don't have a media list already, this will require lots of research. The goal is to find the exact people who will be the focus of your attention. When researching, look for:

- **Who their audience is**
- **The size of their reach eg. circulation, follower count, web traffic volume (bigger might not necessarily be better if your business operates in a niche market)**
- **Where your competition is getting coverage**
- **Whether your brand fits with the type of thing they usually talk about**

STEP THREE - CREATE A MEDIA LIST

Create a media list of each publication, blog and social media account that you think would be a good fit for your brand and might be receptive to your PR content. This is your 'little black book,' and it can grow with you over time. Once you've got this, you can start building relationships with your contact list.

- **Record the name, contact details (email, phone number, social media handle), and how big their audience is**
- **Identify who your core focus contacts are**
- **Include any additional contacts that also chime with your brand**

All good PR agencies will invest quite heavily in tools to help them create detailed, targeted media lists. It can be done manually but be aware that it's a time-consuming task, and you might not be able to find all the information you need.



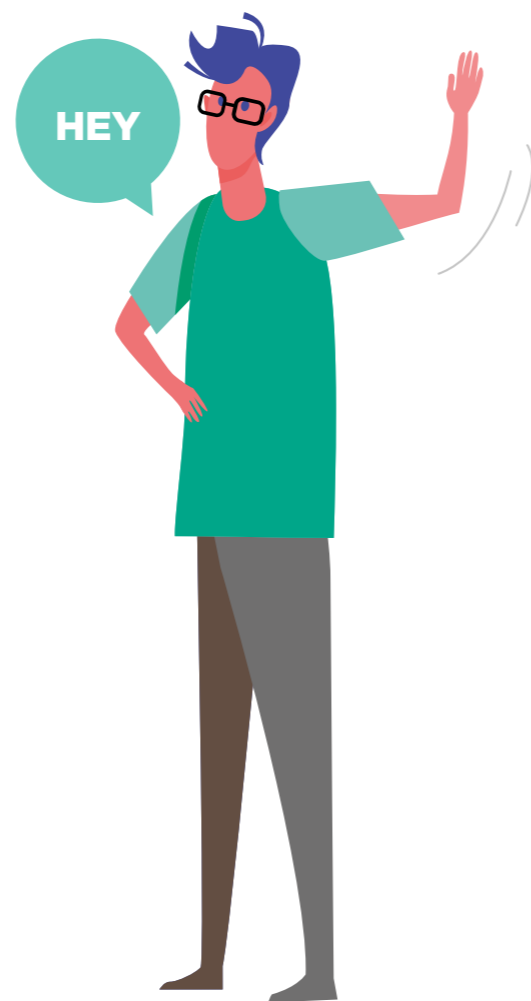


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STEP FOUR – BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIVIDUALS

The next step is to build relationships with the people on your media lists. It's considered polite to get in contact with journalists, bloggers and influencers before you start sending them content and PR opportunities. Plus, their inboxes are usually flooded and they won't be able to reply to everyone – if you've already had some previous communication, you'll be harder to ignore.

- **Journalists tend to be very active on Twitter - follow them and interact with their tweets**
- **Follow and interact with any influencer accounts you want to work with. Get familiar with their content before you get in contact**
- **Send journalists and bloggers an email introducing yourself – make sure it demonstrates your understanding of their work and make them aware that you are happy to help if they ever need content that relates to your brand's area of expertise**
- **Spend more time building relationships with your core contacts on your media list, but don't ignore any additional contacts**



STEP FIVE – SENDING YOUR CONTENT

- **If you're sending written content, it's imperative to ensure it is of publishable quality. It should have no waffle, a clear structure and impeccable spelling and grammar**
- **Always supply a picture or video alongside your written content. You must have rights to this image. Provide a link to a high-resolution version of this image that's saved in the cloud, and include a low-resolution version in the body of your email: high-res images and videos clog journalists' inboxes and can take too long to load**
- **If you're offering a review opportunity to influencers or journalists, it must be of value to them and their audience**
- **Write an accompanying email. Not all PRs do this, but we think it's a good opportunity to maintain your rapport and offer up contributors for further discussion or interview**
- **If you don't get a response, it's always worth sending a follow-up email. However, don't say the dreaded words "Did you see my press release?" - just send it again**



PRINT MEDIA LEAD TIMES

Different publications have different lead times, and it's crucial to be mindful of this if you want to execute a successful PR campaign.

Navigating the media can be complicated. You need to know when you want your story to be published, and work with the media accordingly. Every media outlet will have an individual deadline, but it's very important to know when to deliver your story for the maximum possible exposure and impact.



DIGITAL MEDIA LEAD TIMES

Digital media lead times are often shorter than those of print publications. Written content can be uploaded instantly, so journalists working on digital outlets don't need much notice. If you send a high-quality press release or article that is right for their publication, then it's not unusual for it to be uploaded on the same day.

We think it's always best practice to give journalists time to read your story, do their research and make any edits, so we recommend sending your content a week in advance if possible.

“”

**FOR INFLUENCER CAMPAIGNS,
YOU SHOULD EXPECT A LEAD TIME OF 1-2
MONTHS MINIMUM. THIS LETS YOU:**

OUR GUIDE TO TYPICAL TRADITIONAL MEDIA LEAD TIMES

- National monthly print media - 3-4 months in advance
- National weekly/biweekly print media - 6-8 weeks in advance
- Regional monthly print media - 2-3 months in advance
- Regional weekly print media - 1-2 weeks in advance
- National daily print media - 1 day in advance
- Regional daily print media - 1 day in advance
- TV and radio (news-related) - 1 day in advance
- TV and radio (features) - 1 month in advance

This is only a guide; every publication will operate in a slightly different way, so you need to get familiar with the habits of the outlets you want to target.

- Find and select the right influencers for your brand (Weeks 1-2)
- Finalise a creative brief (Week 3)
- Negotiate any contracts (Week 3)
- Give the influencer time to create and edit their content (Weeks 4-7)
- Approve the content, and allow time for any revisions to be made (Week 8)



CHAPTER 5.

PLANNING YOUR PR STRATEGY

Good PR always starts by doing the groundwork. Without creating a strategy, your campaign will have no cohesion and the messages will be askew.

To be successful in the PR industry, you need to be scrupulously organised. In this chapter you will learn how to plan a PR strategy like a pro.

WE WILL COVER OUR STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH:



AUDIENCE

Communication is the purpose of PR, so you can't begin to craft your strategy until you know who you want to communicate with. Your target audience will usually be the people who will buy your products, use your services, or donate to your cause. You might have a singular target audience, or multiple audiences.

CONSIDER:

Demographics: age, gender, marital status, income, occupations, education

Location: country, city, town etc.

Psychographics: attitudes, opinions, likes and dislikes, hobbies, media habits

Keep in mind that not everyone who interacts with your brand or company will have the same needs and expectations. Before you begin your PR, you need to consider the different people who are important to your company, and determine how each group will want to see you represented:

Consumer: how customers see your brand

Financial/company: how investors and shareholders view your brand

Employee: how your employees view your brand, and how they contribute to your brand image

Community: how your company engages with the local community, and what they want to see from your brand

Consider each group's needs. It's likely there will be commonalities in the needs and expectations of each group, but it's vital to be aware of this ahead of time – you don't want to alienate any of these groups with PR that positions your brand in a way they don't like.

BRAND POSITIONING

PR is all about building a positive reputation in line with the story of your brand. Your company story and values should be in line with the value your customers derive from you.

When a brand doesn't have clear positioning, it can be hard for potential customers to understand why they should choose you over another brand.

Think about your story. Why does your brand exist? What value do you add to your customers' lives? And what are the things that set you apart from your competitors and 'make you, you?' Create your personality around this.

Look at other brands who have created a great brand story for inspiration. Those who have really nailed it include Apple, Nike, Airbnb and Innocent Smoothies.

KEY MESSAGE

The next step is to determine your key message. These are single sentences that reflect your brand personality, communicate key information, and attract the attention of your audience.

It must be memorable, so make it brief, clear and engaging.

Pushing multiple key messages at once is likely to result in a confused campaign. If you think you need to push more than one key message, try focusing on one per quarter.

MEDIA PLAN

Be where your audience is. Conducting research to find out where your target audience consumes information is vital.

It's at this stage that you will discover whether you need to focus on traditional media, digital media, or both. Every brand is different, and the media you target needs to be led by your audience.

Many businesses are choosing to focus solely on digital PR, and that's great if your audience gets most of their media online.

However, don't feel like you have to focus mostly on digital, just because everyone else seems to be doing it. If your audience is more influenced by the traditional media then you should concentrate your efforts there.

For audiences who consume both traditional and digital PR, a blended strategy is likely to be the best way forward. The good news is it doesn't take much more investment to add traditional media to your PR plan.

As discussed in the media relations chapter, you'll want to identify specific publications to be your core focus. One way to strategise this is to create three tiers of media:

TIER 1:

A small group of the most important publications/outlets you want to be featured in. We recommend focussing on 3-5 outlets with a large circulation or following among your target audience

TIER 2:

A larger group of publications, perhaps with a smaller reach, but that are still relevant to much of your audience

TIER 3:

Publications that you will distribute to, but whose coverage is less essential to your campaign. You won't concentrate much time trying to win this coverage, but it's 'nice to have' if you get it.

FIND NEWSWORTHY STORIES IN YOUR BUSINESS

We've already covered this in more detail in previous chapters. Be led by the media your audience consumes. What type of stories or features do they run, how can you make your brand appeal to journalists or influencers on your chosen channels, as well as your target audience?

Be creative. If you can't think of anything to talk about, then you need to be proactive. Do something great in your community, conduct original research, or give your take on a current industry issue.



SETTING TARGETS

To help you achieve your business goals, you need to know what you want to get from it. Setting your key performance indicators (KPIs) and regularly reviewing them is crucial. Don't shy away from numerical goals, as they can give you real focus. Your targets can be scaled with your business and can become more ambitious as the momentum of your PR increases. Here's some examples of the kind of KPIs you could set for your PR:

- Get three pieces of coverage per month in your tier 1 media
- 15 pieces of coverage per month in tier 2 media
- Three backlinks per quarter in your tier 1 digital outlets
- Get 25% more searches than your closest competitor after 12 months (Google Trends is a good tool for this)
- Get 50 visitors to your website from third party backlinks in your PR content per month
- 3k impressions on your influencer campaigns

Remember to set achievable goals that will help you increase brand awareness over time, rather than vanity metrics. (Vanity metrics are the kind of measurements that make you look good to others, but don't actually help you to inform future strategies by understanding your performance.)

CRITICAL PATH OF ACTIVITY

Once you know what media you want to target, and what you want to achieve, you can plot a critical path of activity.

Organisation and preparation are key; you need to plot your planned activity against dates.

Getting coverage in the digital media - and especially the traditional media - often requires you to be working on your content well ahead of time. Good PR agencies create detailed timetables well in advance of every PR campaign they run, to ensure they never run over media deadlines and miss out on getting the coverage they want.

You don't have to stick to your path of activity religiously. In fact, it's important to be agile. PR practitioners need to stay informed of current conversations and jump on any opportunities, trends and new stories they can offer an angle on.

We think it's much easier to be agile when you have a plan. If a new opportunity presents itself, you can quickly input a new path of activity, and reassign planned content where necessary.

PR MEASUREMENT

Any effective PR strategy will include a plan for how you will measure your activity.

Regularly measuring your PR is vital to:

- Determine whether you are on track to achieving your KPIs
- See what is going well
- Know what isn't getting the traction you want, and where to make changes
- See whether your targets need reviewing

It's important to choose measurement techniques that will help you to analyse your activity in relation to your KPIs. Head to the next chapter to find out more about PR measurement.



CHAPTER 6.

MEASURING IMPACT

PR has a reputation for being difficult to measure. Many PR objectives – like building brand awareness and a positive reputation – aren't easy to quantify. Results are also best achieved over a long period of time, and this 'fuzziness' has historically frustrated many business owners looking to hit big numerical targets in a short space of time. Luckily, the rise of digital PR has given practitioners a huge number of new and incredibly useful ways to measure PR activity and determine the results of your hard work.

FORGET AVEs

Traditionally, PR was measured using AVEs. AVE stands for Advertising Value Equivalent. It estimates the monetary value of PR by looking at how much a piece would be worth if it was a paid advert. AVE analysis has died out in most of the PR world, because advertising rates fluctuate and are often over-charged, and there are now many more useful methods of measurement available.



THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES

THE SEVEN COMMANDMENTS OF PR MEASUREMENT

The Barcelona principles are a set of voluntary guidelines developed in 2010 when representatives from AMEC – the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication – and PR practitioners from 33 countries met in Barcelona.

Since then, they have been updated twice, once in 2015 to reflect the importance of digital media, and once again in 2020. Professional PR practitioners should be using the 2020 update, known in the industry as the Barcelona Principles 3.0:

- 1 Setting measurable goals is an absolute prerequisite to communication planning, measurement, and evaluation.**
Know what you want to achieve before you start
- 2 Measurement and evaluation should identify outputs, outtakes, outcomes, and potential impact.**
Measure your coverage and what key messages you got across. Look at what your audience did as a result of your coverage, and look at the impact it had on your business
- 3 Outcomes and impact should be identified for stakeholders, society, and the organisation.**
Measure different outcomes for different audiences
- 4 Communication measurement and evaluation should include both qualitative (numbers & stats) and quantitative (words & meanings) analysis.**
We've included both qualitative and quantitative measurement tips below
- 5 AVEs are not the value of communication.**
AVEs are outdated and do not help us understand the true value of PR
- 6 Holistic communication measurement and evaluation includes all relevant online and offline channels.**
Social media posts, shares and influencer promotion are just as important as online and offline coverage
- 7 Communication measurement and evaluation are rooted in integrity and transparency to drive learning and insights.**
Don't inflate measurement for your own gains!

WHAT REAL DATA CAN BE MEASURED?

The Barcelona Principles recommend measuring outputs, outtakes, outcomes, and impacts. In practice this looks like:

OUTPUTS

The things we can count

- > Number of cuttings
- > Number of spokesperson quotes
- > Number of brand name mentions
- > Number of key message mentions
- > Number of social media posts
- > Website backlinks

OUTTAKES

Who was reached

- > Media reach
- > Social media likes
- > Event attendance



OUTCOMES

The things people do

- > Click a website link
- > Download an eBook
- > Make a nomination
- > Sign up to an email list

IMPACTS

What happens

- > Increase in sales/footfall
- > Increase in website traffic
- > Whether coverage has 'halo effect' - can it have a long-term impact on the brand
- > Share of voice - what percentage of media coverage is a client getting in comparison to competitors

MEASUREMENT TOOLS

MEDIA MONITORING AGENCY

PR agencies use media monitoring agencies to pick up online and print coverage. This lets you see how much coverage you achieved and which media outlets you were featured in. They are an invaluable tool - you would otherwise have to spend time and money searching for coverage yourself - but they do come with a subscription fee.

GOOGLE TRENDS

This is a really useful tool that can be used to compare the 'chatter' of a brand against a competitor. Here's a Google Trends comparison we did for our client:



SOCIAL LISTENING TOOLS

Social listening tools monitor mentions of your brand. This is a great way to keep track of what customers and prospects are saying about your business, products, or service.

Look at tools such as GoogleAlerts and SocialMention. HARO is another good platform that lets you listen in on public relations opportunities for your brand and find places to offer your expert opinion.

SURVEYS

In-person surveys, or digital surveys (such as doing an Instagram poll) are a great qualitative form of measurement that can help you track public perception of your brand. Make sure you conduct surveys before you begin your PR, so you can compare the results to the survey feedback you receive during and after your campaign.

The main thing to remember is - you want the time you spend measuring your PR to be well spent. Just because you can get the data for something doesn't mean it should be measured. Think about whether the information will actually help you determine if you are meeting your KPIs and overall objectives - like brand awareness, building a positive reputation, and supporting your SEO.

We hope that this insight into the world of PR has demonstrated that a great public relations campaign can take on many forms.

No two businesses are the same, and a brilliant PR strategy - whether that encompasses traditional media, digital media, or both - should be unique to your brand, your ethics and your values. Boldly showing the world who you are is what really gets audiences on your side - what better way to do that than with an inspiring, persuasive and impactful PR campaign?

“”

**IF I WAS DOWN TO THE LAST
DOLLAR BILL OF MY MARKETING
BUDGET, I'D SPEND IT ON PR!**

Bill Gates

FINALLY,

**if your PR, or any aspect of your marketing,
could do with a dose of creativity and some help
from the experts, just pick up the phone and
give us a call on**

01403 783400

GOOD LUCK
to you and your business!



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