

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO  
PR AND MEDIA  
RELATIONS**

**FOR 'START-UPS' AND SMALL TO  
MEDIUM-SIZED COMPANIES**

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## **HOW CAN PR AND MEDIA RELATIONS HELP YOUR BUSINESS?**

To begin with, put any preconceptions about PR out of your mind. Far too often, PR is used as a propaganda tool by major companies, so-called celebrities and even politicians as a way of influencing the public.

In reality, Public Relations is a modern-day catchphrase encompassing the many varied methods at our disposal by which we can communicate with our target audiences.

In business terms, it should be considered as a necessary part of any company's launch and development programme.

PR and media relations, if applied to run in parallel with your business development and marketing plans, will help to a) get a new business off the ground and b) further enhance a company's reputation and, as a result, its performance.

## **THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPANY**

The Public Relations Company is a private limited company based at Hesslewood Hall, Hessle, and is one of the region's best known PR and media relations specialists working with local, regional and national clients.

Founded in 1970, the company operates under the Code of Conduct laid down by the Public Relations Consultants Association.

Our team provides a high quality mix of journalistic, public relations, marketing and management skills and we are proud of the fact that our knowledge of and contact with the media in the Hull and Humber region and the greater Yorkshire region is unrivalled.

We are much more than a Press Office facility.

We provide a thoughtful, strategic approach to long-term communications, assessing the objectives and devising and implementing an agreed programme through which those objectives can be achieved.

We are a modern company using up-to-date IT, networks and the latest software packages ensuring the utmost efficiency in time management.

## **THE VALUE OF MEDIA RELATIONS**

When used correctly, 'the media' can be a very effective business development tool, helping you to communicate your key messages directly to a target audience. However, this activity must be managed carefully and, preferably, by an experienced practitioner since there are hidden pitfalls.

Your media relations agency or adviser must have experience in the field of business and/or feature journalism. Employing an account manager without this basic skill is unlikely to achieve the results you require and could alienate the business journalist. He or she is usually pressed for time, almost certainly wary of PR people and always in need of accurate, informative, authoritative copy, preferably written by a former journalist.

Your Press Office function should work to a simple tried and tested formula:

- Identify the influential journalists in your region or possibly in your business sector, establish contact and form a two-way relationship -
- Provide the journalist with concise, accurate and informative copy in the style and length required by his/her publication -
- Never offer sub-standard copy or articles with little or no news value

Effective media relations consultancies should achieve regular coverage. However, priorities

should be set. For example, business magazines often have limited value and provide in the main 'paid-for' coverage, while evening newspapers are generally keen to feature local companies.

National professional and trade publications produce annual editorial schedules and the consultancy should monitor these to identify forthcoming opportunities for the client.

**So what makes an appealing business news story?** Here are a few guidelines:

- The launch of a new business
- The appointment of a new director/manager
- Management changes (perhaps linked with forecasts for the future of the business)
- Expansion programmes (moves into new areas, opening satellite branches)
- Investment in new premises
- The launch of new products
- Expansion of the workforce (job opportunities)
- VIP visits
- Staff activities (sponsorships, fund-raising, personal achievements)

Where appropriate, articles should be issued with a photograph and in this respect the consultancy should source and direct all photography, gradually developing a library of shots available to the media at a moment's notice.

The frequency of press announcements clearly depends on news itself but as a guideline you should expect to issue two to three articles every four to six weeks.

### **HOUSE NEWSPAPER**

To supplement your media relations activity you might consider a company newsletter, usually issued quarterly as a direct marketing tool to raise the company's awareness in the region's business community and to improve the flow of controlled information to employees, suppliers and existing and potential clients.

Much of the editorial material for the newsletters would be generated by the on-going media relations programme and your consultancy should take care of the content schedule, all copywriting, photography, design and print.

### **HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO GET STARTED?**

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPANY works with local, regional and national clients and provides effective campaigns to suit all budgets.

As a guideline to small businesses and start-up companies, for a one-off fee of £300, the consultancy will research, write and issue one Press Release. For £400, the consultancy will take care of two Press Releases.

In addition, TPRC will provide a free initial consultancy and produce an outline proposal of the PR and media needs of the company for an initial period of up to four months.

The review will offer guidance on media relations, marketing literature, advertising, website development and general PR activities. It will give you an idea of where, how and how not to spend your marketing budget.

### **A GUIDE TO CAMPAIGN COSTS**

If you are planning a long-term PR and media relations campaign as part of your on-going business development, you should agree a budget for the year. In some cases, this can be as little as £4,000, while others will commit tens of thousands. The key is to accept that the fee must always reflect the activity.

If you are nervous at the prospect of a year-long campaign, negotiate an initial 'trial' period of three or four months at the end of which you should hold a review meeting to assess the effectiveness of the campaign, its value for money and the way forward.

If you agree to a retainer fee paid monthly, this should cover:

- A Press Office function producing on average two media announcements every four to six weeks
- A copywriting service for the house newsletter and any new brochures, sales material, advertisements etc

- Advice on internal and employee communications
- Project management of design and print matters
- Fielding calls from advertisement sales personnel
- Attending client/consultancy meetings
- Providing advice on crisis/issue management (but not implementation)

Bought-in services such as design, print and photography will be charged extra and should always be subject to clear quotes between the client and the consultancy.

We hope you find this brief report useful in your selection of a PR and media relations provider. For further information, please contact Mike Stathers at The Public Relations Company of (01482) 647575 or [mike@tprc.co.uk](mailto:mike@tprc.co.uk).

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