

Effective PR - 5 Top Tips

How to get yourself noticed

You can gain valuable exposure from a well managed public relations campaign. Focussed PR relies on building relationships with the press and making the most out of opportunities. Successful PR is about building a company's reputation and representing it in a positive light. Set out below is some advice and guidance on how to get the coverage you need.

Plan your PR

As with any business activity you will do better if you plan what it is you want to achieve. Set out clearly what your objectives are – is it to generate awareness of a new service, attract potential investors, create a higher profile than your competitors or raise your profile amongst potential clients/customers?

Target your media

Who is it you want to reach? Take time to educate yourself about the media outlets you are targeting, this will give you an idea of the type of story you need to present to optimise your chances of coverage. Local, trade and national press all have very different news agendas and type of story. Local papers would be interested in a local business' success or new jobs available. Trade press would be interested in new services or products or issues related news.

Find out who it is on the publication you need to talk to, if its news it will be a news editor, if it's a feature it will be the features editor.

Pay attention to their deadlines and stick to them. It's not only about providing the right information it's about the right time. If a journalist wants a quote/information/photo by a particular date then ensure you keep to it, otherwise you run the risk of being overlooked in future.

Understand the news agenda

You need to look outside the company for interesting stories. Scan the relevant media and see what they are writing about. Make a note of your target media's news agenda and link them to your own. Write a list of the top ten stories that appear in your target media and then a list of the top ten stories you have to offer and see where the overlap is. In this way your stories will be powerful, topical and relevant.

Grab their attention

Editors receive hundreds of press releases every day, most of which end up in the bin. To ensure yours is the press release that gets read make it newsworthy, relevant to their readers, timely (old news is no news) and written in a clear and concise way. By providing a journalist with newsworthy information in a timely manner in a format they are familiar with, using a communication vehicle of their choice you are setting your company up for some well deserved coverage.

Make the most of your PR opportunities

News stories are all about thinking laterally, news comes in many guises. Have you recruited a key member of staff? Opened new premises? Had a spectacular company record breaking month/year? A surge of new business? A success story with a well known client? A key company milestone such as the anniversary of the start of the company or a key sales mark?

If there is no news, then be creative. Do a customer survey and send interesting findings to the media. Identify a topical business issue (for example employment law, business regulations) and put forward a company spokesperson to provide insight into it. A 'Letter to Editor' of a magazine is an excellent way to generate some PR.