Appointing a PR Agency?

How to maximise success and find the right agency for you: a checklist

Choosing a PR agency

Finding the right PR agency to fulfil your requirements isn't always easy. But by investing a little time in your search, and researching your options thoroughly, you can save yourself both time and money in the long-run. We hope this PR checklist will enable you to make the right choice about finding the right PR agency for you.

1. Check the PR agency's credentials

There are hundreds of PR firms out there, all of which will be vying for your business. But not all PR agencies or marketing consultants have the credentials to back-up their claims (or costs). Appointing the wrong PR agency can, at best, leave you out of pocket; at worst, it can irretrievably damage your reputation. So do some research and explore their client base, read their testimonials, search their portfolios, and check their case studies first. It's also prudent to check whether the agency is a member of a recognised professional organisation (such as the PRCA or CIPR) and, if so, that they have achieved Communications Management Standard (CMS) excellence. For added security, it's also prudent to check that they hold a current licence with the Newspaer Licensing Agency.

2. Does the PR agency have experience in your sector, or has it worked on similar products and/or brands?

It's crucial that the PR agency you appoint has significant experience in your sector (consumer PR, book PR, tourism PR, etc), or with your product type and target audience (B2B or B2C). Remember that experience is different from success, so ask to see testimonials and/or case studies relating to your business type or objectives. Industry awards are also a good indication of an agency's proficiency.

The size of an agency can also be an important factor when choosing a PR firm. If your requirements are relatively modest, it could pay to appoint a small to medium-sized agency. But if your objectives are complex – and may need a team of experts to facilitate – you should speak with a PR agency with the manpower and capability to do so. Palamedes PR, for example, is a small PR firm and, despite the calibre of its PR campaigns, would be unable to single-handedly manage all internal and external communications for a major blue-chip organisation (however much we'd like to!).

3. Journalistic Pedigree

The public relations industry is rife with practitioners lacking any credible journalistic experience. The overwhelming majority of PR professionals have never set foot in a newsroom (or, indeed, worked in any professional journalistic capacity). That's not to say that they don't perform superbly, or that agencies with former journalists at the helm will do any better. But in the words of one Daily Mail journalist, "A dental nurse may well understand how to pull a tooth, but I'd prefer a trained dentist to do the job". Either way, always check the background and experience of its account managers first.

4. Transparency and Coverage

It is quite impossible to guarantee media coverage, regardless of an agency's "journalistic contacts". Put simply, PR-driven copy competes for space alongside the biggest news items of the day – a battle it often loses. Reputable agencies (including Palamedes PR) will, however, deliver copy in such a way that the likelihood of obtaining media coverage is significant. Some (like us), also offer replacement services at no extra cost and/or a reduction in fees.

5. KPIs

Accountability and measurability are key principles of a reputable agency's campaigns. Evaluation should be more than anecdotal; campaigns must deliver credible proof of results. With this in mind, check what Key Performance Indicators – quantifiable metrics to gauge performance – will be put in the place during your campaign, and how those KPIs will be assessed.

6. ROI - PR costs versus investment

Reputable PR agencies focus almost entirely upon return on investment (ROI) – the success of their work in financial, reach, and engagement terms. While it may be tempting to appoint the cheapest firm on the internet, you should do so cautiously. Remember that you get what you pay for and the maxim, 'It's too good to be true' also holds true here. If you buy a cheap product or service, you run the risk of disappointment or, worse, reputational damage. Good PR should be a sound investment, whatever the price – so choose wisely.

About Palamedes PR

Palamedes PR is a specialist news-generation PR agency that secures award-winning national and international media exposure for its varied client base. We have a proven track record for generating positive coverage in the print, digital and broadcast (TV and radio) media on a daily basis.

Our specialisms lie in the publishing, consumer, property, tourism, and business-to-business sectors. We also win awards for our incredible PR stunts.

If you're looking for the best PR representation that money can buy, join our stable of discerning clients and get the attention you deserve.

As our logo says, it's your future, after all.

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