

PR is very often viewed as the poor relation of the marketing family; if press releases are sent out sporadically or the blog updated once in a while then that side of the marketing mix is fully serviced. Successful and expanding companies tend to understand that communications with clients, prospects and suppliers through messages developed within the media is vital and is a key strand of any marketing campaign

Think of any successful brand, in the geospatial industry or beyond and consider how your perceptions of that company have been formed. More often than not their PR campaigns will have had a huge influence.

PR can be defined as the function that attempts to evaluate, manage and influence the public's attitudes and evaluation of a company's offerings, working-practices and beliefs. The number of channels that exist today to achieve this are as many as they are varied and hence require attention. Press releases must sit alongside editorial articles, social network comments, conference speaking, sponsorship etc.

PR is certainly a much cheaper way of promoting a company but the amount of time involved should not be underestimated. Getting the right message designed and subsequently placed will take effort and commitment.

Increased Impact Through Trust

Advertising is key to promoting any company and a well designed and thoughtful ad campaign will certainly boost their profile and sales. That said, many customers are sceptical about the claims carried in paid-for pages of magazines or websites. Positive coverage within the editorial pages of these publications is crucial to persuade everyone of the company's capabilities and credentials.

Develop A Wider Reach

Direct Marketing is a one-to-one communication with the company's target list (prospects, clients etc.) and carries specific messages to that group. In contrast to this targeted method of marketing, PR has the advantage of serendipity and these messages maybe seen by prospects that the company has never met.

Tell A Good Story Not A Dull One

Journalists will receive hundreds of press releases a week, each extolling the virtues of that company's revolutionary product or game-changing service; not one of them will be turned into an article unless the journalist can see an interesting and relevant article for his or her audience.

Whilst the company might think that a list of the incredible new features of version x.x will be wow, the journalist will not. There is no story. Version x.x must be relevant to the readers; how will it make their life easier, more productive, or even just different.

Can version x.x be linked to something that is already in the news? Will one of the features address a problem that lots of people come up against all the time? If so, there is an interesting so make the most of it and ditch the list.

Sponsorship Is For Everyone

Watching Formula 1 cars fly round the world and the world's race tracks covered in household names tends to put the idea of sponsoring out of the reach of most companies. Sponsoring Formula 1 is out of the reach of most companies but that doesn't mean other opportunities should be overlooked.

Sponsorship can be a unusual, eye-catching marketing tool and one, inline with the point above, that leads to interesting stories. Why did the company get involved with the local sports club? What will the partnership with the charity create? Of course it is important that the sponsorship is heartfelt and not simply for effect.

Be Accurate

Whilst everyone wants information now and in some cases yesterday, it is worth taking time to get PR right. That means the message just as much as the execution. Spelling mistakes send the message that the company's PR is so unimportant that no one took the time to check it for the simplest errors; and that is with the existence of automatic spellcheckers!