

Creating a great PR brief

Good PR agencies will insist on starting your working relationship – and indeed, starting key projects along the way – with a solid brief about what you want and need the campaign to achieve.

The PR brief needs to provide enough detail so that anyone, without any understanding of the key issues, can understand the purpose, timelines, targets, outcomes and measures of success you require from your PR investment.

What to include in your PR brief:

1. Background

- i. Setting the scene: outline the marketing opportunity/problem – that is, why you want to achieve through PR (eg introduce a new product or service, or address sales objections).
- ii. What is happening in the market - eg buyer profile, any information you have on buying behaviours of the target group.
- iii. The competitive landscape: include information (formal research or informal feedback) that outlines how customers and prospects perceive you vs competitors; and what importance they attach to your competitive differentiators.
- iv. Outcomes of previous PR or marketing programs

2. Simultaneous initiatives

That is, any planned developments (eg new resources or initiatives) you will be introducing that will impact on your business goals

3. Target market

Suggest the audiences you are interested in – whether these are stratified horizontally (eg ‘CIOs’) or vertically (eg ‘Legal services companies’).

4. Goal

Be as clear as you can be about the intended outcome of the campaign. Goals can usually be phrased in terms such as “To create awareness of our track record in XXX market” or “To achieve market acceptance of YYY new service”.

5. Strategy and Tactics

Tactics are the tools we use to achieve your objectives – and these would be expressed in terms such as “Implementing a national PR campaign targeting XXX market”. From here, it is also useful to outline any tactics you wish to see used (eg “Media launch for AAA new product”) or talk with us about an effective strategy and toolset to achieve your goals.

6. Key Messages

These encapsulate the “reasons why” of your goal – for instance, the reason customers would benefit from buying a new product or service, as well as the reasons customers would benefit from choosing you over your competitors.

Key messages are the foundation of an effective marketing campaign – and beyond that, they also help your sales teams speak clearly to potential customers.

If you don’t have key messages already identified (and agreed by your sales and customer support teams), we recommend starting your campaign with a half-day Message Lab through which Pentica PR guides you to a clear set of Key Messages.

7. Timeframes

Indicate the time period in which you want to achieve the goal - eg six months, a year, two years.

8. Administration

How do you want the project to run – for instance, do you want regular updates during the project, or will you be unavailable for significant portions of it? Who is authorised to speak on behalf of the company in your absence?

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9. Budget

The size and scope of the PR campaign will depend largely on your budget – and by establishing your budget upfront you will quickly be able to determine what the agency can deliver.

10. Measures of success

In the olden days, PR measured itself in terms of advertising value equivalents (that is, how much it would cost to pay for the column inches of media coverage you've achieved). Today, we are able to draw on a broader set of measures – such as tracking prospect touchpoints, or even shifting some indicators of customer behaviour. At Pentica PR, we love PR backed by solid market research and/or customer analysis – but if that's not possible, we'll talk with you about other, less formal measures that can establish the impact of the PR campaign.

While these 10 steps will lead to a clearer understanding of your PR needs – and consequently, a better campaign – it's not vital to have all the answers before your first meeting with the PR team.

At Pentica PR, we often start by talking with you – and if we can, your customers – to gain the broadest possible understanding of the competitive landscape, your business drivers and key issues. Once we have a real understanding of the context, we can work with you to identify which business levers to focus on – so that the resultant campaign addresses the right issues for your business.

Pentica PR is one of Australia's most experienced public relations agencies. We help B2B, technology and professional services companies communicate intelligently with their customers, the media and other stakeholders – thereby building a reputation that helps drive revenue.

For more information about how Pentica PR can help you achieve real business goals, see us at www.pentica.com.au