



The full service marketing agency for the Construction Industry



# HOW TO WIN HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH PR

**Public relations centres around reputation. It is a series of planned activities, designed to create good communication and therefore, build relationships between an organisation and its public.**

Thank you for downloading How to win hearts and minds through Public Relations (PR), an exclusive white paper brought to you by Purplex Marketing, the leading PR and marketing agency in the construction industry.

The name Purplex is an acronym for Purpose, Planning and Execution, a marketing theory that we apply to every campaign we implement, whether for ourselves or our clients.

In this document you will learn valuable hints and tips to help you execute a PR campaign that generates more sales, bigger profit margins and ultimately helps you grow your business.

## PURPOSE

Before you begin any PR campaign, it is vital to establish the purpose of the activity to help influence and develop the key messages you wish to portray within the media. Below are some of the goals you may be looking to achieve:

### LAUNCH INTO A NEW MARKET

Perhaps you're a start-up company and need to put your business on the map. Or maybe you're an established company but want to start making waves in a new market. Either way, PR can raise awareness and build your brand in a new sector.

### LAUNCH A NEW PRODUCT OR SERVICE

If you're launching a new product or service, make sure potential customers are aware of it through coverage in the press. Many trade magazines in the building and construction industry have 'new product' features, so a press release in one of these publications could generate a quick win.





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## GENERATE SALES LEADS

Quite simply, your primary purpose could be to generate more sales leads. Utilising a number of marketing tactics like direct mail, email campaigns, SEO, PPC and social media in conjunction with PR will amplify your overall marketing results.

## REACTIVE PR

If you find a competitor is attacking your business in the press and it's causing damage to your reputation, you should write and issue a response as soon as possible to address their claims. When drafting your comment make sure to choose your words and messages carefully to avoid adding more fuel to the fire.

## ADD WEIGHT BEHIND YOUR COMPANY WITH SUPPLIERS

Remember PR is about your reputation and not just with potential customers – it includes all stakeholders. Good PR will help you engage with suppliers, investors, potential employees and the local community. In the construction industry, suppliers always listen to high profile customer testimonials so including quotes in your PR can give you more leverage.

## ATTRACT QUALITY STAFF

Struggling to find the quality staff you need to grow? Don't forget it's not just about showcasing your products in the media. Sharing business news and positioning your company as a great place to work with exciting opportunities and future plans will help to attract the right people.

## LOCK IN YOUR EXISTING CUSTOMERS

Positive PR is not only great for attracting new customers but also helps to keep existing customers happy. Reading news stories about your company reinforces they're buying from the right supplier, making them less likely to go elsewhere.

## EDUCATE YOUR AUDIENCE

Perhaps you're selling a product or service that your audience needs but doesn't quite understand yet. Using PR to educate your prospective clients on the features and benefits will drum up interest and generate sales.

## ATTRACT A BUYER OR AN INVESTOR

Potential investors are likely to do their research and seeing your company in the media will showcase it as an attractive proposition. If it's investment you're after, PR can also help you achieve this.



## PLANNING

Now you've decided your purpose, you can move on to the next planning stage. The following tips will help you plan your PR campaign effectively:

### IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Begin the planning stage by understanding who your target audience is. Once you've identified them, do your homework about their world. What are their business problems? What are their interests? How do they consume information? This will help you to create a strategy that connects with your audience across relevant touch points with information that is suited to them.

### BUILD A MEDIA LIST

Next you need to identify what magazines, journals, e-zines and websites your customers like to read. Use this information to build a list of all the editors and journalists you'll need to contact. Many magazines have multiple editors so make sure you have the details of the correct contact. There are a myriad of channels through which you can communicate – from the more traditional methods to the latest social media platforms – and to create a successful PR campaign you need to choose, integrate and use these tools effectively.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Many PR campaigns have more than one purpose, and as long as your strategy is well thought out and cohesive, it is perfectly acceptable to have several messages running at the same time.

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## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY JOURNALISTS

Once you know who the journalists are, you need to build a relationship with them. Ultimately, if you're friends with a journalist, they're more likely to read your emails, take your calls and run your stories. Take the journalist out for lunch, buy them a few drinks and stay in close contact.

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

Journalists are notorious for hating 'PR puff' and will always prefer facts, statistics and research over a 'salesy' press releases. If you haven't got access to any interesting facts and figures, do some thorough research and base your PR around this. For instance, you could send out a customer survey and use the results to create an interesting news angle for the trade media.

## OBTAIN QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHY

Every journalist wants their magazine to look great, but many don't have the budget to hire a professional photographer in-house. Obtaining stunning photography in the planning stage will help you achieve better PR coverage in the future.

## CONSIDER STUNTS AND EVENTS

If you're looking for instant impact, then consider planning a PR stunt. Also, running a series of events or seminars can boost your reputation and credibility. Step out of your sales comfort zone – and if you want future clients to come and talk to you, make sure there is something in it for them.

## CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Let's face it, the media love celebrities and readers will pay more attention to a story if it includes a famous face. You may not personally know any celebrities, but tap into your friends and business contacts and you'll be surprised who knows who. If you have the budget, it would also be worth hiring a celebrity for a media event. MPs are often willing to oblige so keep them in mind.



## EXECUTION

You have a purpose, you've decided on a plan, now these tips will help you execute everything effectively.

### CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

Whether you are tweeting, blogging, writing thought leadership pieces or news releases, keep the message clear and be prepared to be bold and challenge opinion. Seek emotional connection – after-all it's the attention of people within the business that you are looking for. Focus on the human story and remember to be 'remarkable' and stand out from the crowd. "Manufacturing Company launches new product" is a run of the mill story but "MD of Manufacturing Company overcomes adversity to launch new product" will grab the reader's attention.

Using another construction industry example, the way you would engage with an architect is very different to how you would communicate to a tradesman, and therefore your PR communications need to reflect this.

### PRODUCE EXCLUSIVE SCOOPS

Journalists want their publication to stand out from the competition, and an exclusive scoop is one of the best ways of doing this. An exclusive will grab the editor's attention and give your story more coverage. However, be mindful you can't run the same story in other titles – if you say it's exclusive, you need to keep it exclusive.

### NEWS IS NEW

Anything that is 'new' and relevant to their readers is gold dust to any journalist. However, try not to publish news on your social media and website if it hasn't been shared with the media. Journalists are unlikely to cover something that has previously been published. Remember this is pretty black and white for those working in the media; it's either new or it isn't.



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## BE TOPICAL

Take whatever's in the news today and see if there is an angle relating to your business. You can piggyback off everything from political news to sporting events and light-hearted entertainment. If it's current and popular, it is sure to be of interest to journalists.

## TRY 'QUICK FIRE' PR

Other quick wins can be crafted from a small number of key stories run in rapid succession that present your people, services, brands and products in targeted publications, blasting your name across the media for maximum impact. Longer term, these smaller news bites and regular mentions strengthen your position as a main industry player, a leading expert and someone worth talking to. They also create the fuel for sustained online PR across digital and social media channels.

## DON'T BE BORING – FIND INTERESTING ANGLES AND BE CREATIVE

Editors receive hundreds of press releases every day and if your content is bland and boring it's likely to end up on the cutting room floor. Take time to think about who is reading the publication and the sorts of stories that are likely to interest them. Rather than circulating the same story to lots of different magazines, try tailoring each release for each publication. This may be a little more time consuming, but the greater PR coverage will be worth the extra effort.

## LOOK FOR THE HUMAN INTEREST

Every good story has an element of human interest at its core, whether that's a customer case study or business success story. Always try to identify an angle which puts a person at the forefront to engage with the audience.

## NEWSJACKING

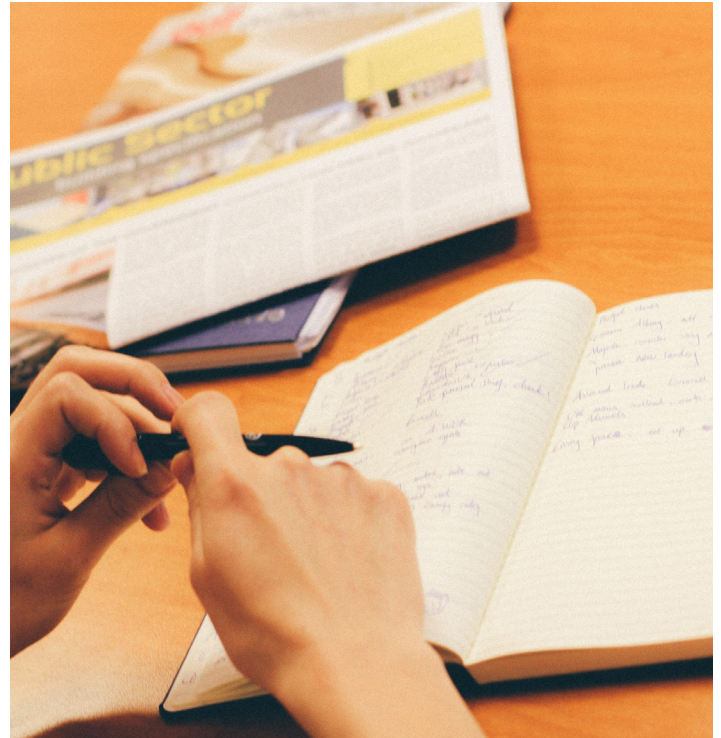
Use the news agenda to get your brand mentioned by drafting quick and reactive newsjacking comments. Newsjacking is the combination of 'news' and 'hijacking' and allows companies to be at the forefront of information about an event. Newsjacking comments must add additional insight beyond the facts and create great opportunities for businesses to have their say in the media.

## PROVIDE QUALITY

Editorial teams are smaller than ever and the modern journalist is under pressure to edit and create excellent quality content in a very short space of time. Help journalists meet their deadlines by supplying the information they need and you'll be rewarded with better coverage.

## AND FINALLY, DON'T STRAY FROM THE ESSENTIALS

All effective PR campaigns contain the same core ingredients: good headlines, relevant topics and quality content. Answering the who, what, where, when and why will give the reader the key information they need. Don't be tempted to stray from any of these key elements, even with a paid editorial. You want your audience to notice your message so make sure your stories get your business noticed.



## NEED HELP?

If you want to implement a PR campaign but you're not sure how to go about it – talk to Purplex. Our expert PR team work closely with the editors and journalists of the leading trade and consumer publications, as well as a host of specialist titles, newspapers and other media.

Your editorial coverage will be targeted, responsive and engaging, with a stream of messages linked to your core brand and goals. The results are proven and often spectacular. As your brand and reputation grow, so do sales and profit margins.

We can dovetail your editorial coverage with other communications including social media, newsletter, blogs and case studies.

- Press releases, articles and features
- Opinion pieces and 'thought leadership'
- Editorial visits and interviews
- Newsletters and ezines
- Blogs and online content
- White papers and industry reports
- Case studies and projects

If you would like to know more, call Purplex on **020 3137 9319** or email **grow@purplexmarketing.com**



BRISTOL OFFICE (HQ): Unit 502 | Worle Park Way | Weston-super-Mare | BS22 6WA – T: 01934 428 771  
LONDON OFFICE: Golden Cross House | 8 Duncannon Street | The Strand | London | WC2N 4JF – T: 020 3137 9319

E: [grow@purplexmarketing.com](mailto:grow@purplexmarketing.com)

[www.purplexmarketing.com](http://www.purplexmarketing.com)



@Purplexuk



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