

Growing brand belief - the core of PR

By [Keri-Ann Stanton](#)

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We, at Engage Joe Public, believe that the core of PR is developing meaningful, relevant, sustainable relationships with media, influencers and consumers.

Why? Because even in an instant-gratification world, we still want consistency, trust, credibility. Campaigns are exciting but it is SACRILEGE to build a campaign community and then not talk to them until the next campaign. We are all guilty of it. Brand managers and budgets are guilty of it.

But we really are missing the point of PR if all we do is appear to spin a story, launch, then disappear, campaign, then fall off the radar.

PR is the drip, drip, drip consistency between campaigns. The drip, drip, drip of awareness, the drip, drip, drip of proactive opportunities, the drip, drip, drip of reputation management. It is the drip, drip, drip that spots a relevant piece in the media and reacts proactively.

It is the drip, drip, drip that sees a tweet or Instagram post that sparks an idea, the drip, drip, drip that wins brand love that sees you through a crisis. And it is that drip, drip, drip that becomes a stream, that becomes the river, that fills the dam from which we create sustainability.



Image via [123RF](#)

PR is about growing brand belief, but growth does not happen overnight. This is what EARNs you media (as opposed to paid and owned media).

It was thus with much interest that I followed Chris Graves, Chair of the PR Council (the group representing America's PR firms), who recently said the PR industry should be emphasising its ability to deliver 'earned influence' rather than focusing on earned media.

"If we dive deep into the core of what PR can be, at its most meaningful and most competent, it is a powerful differentiator from advertising and other marketing disciplines. Because at our essence, we understand the art and science of building relationships. When successful, those relationships allow us to engage others with purpose and respect, to share, educate, inform and entertain. Through these relationships, we earn the right to try to join conversations and maybe even change minds. We earn that right to influence others. Call it earned influence."

I like this. Because once again this pushes us to the core of our practice - relationships. And we all know earned media is just one aspect of PR. Earned influence. Isn't that lovely? Bravo, Mr Graves, bravo.

He goes on to say: "When PR is done right, when it is built on listening to people and getting to know them, and developing a relationship based on understanding their interests and meeting their needs, it is all about relationships," he says. "All PR content should be about building that relationship."

Paul Holmes, publisher and CEO of The Holmes Group, wrote about Graves' new take in a great piece, "*Earned Influence - A New Definition Of PR's Value?*" and minces no words on the importance of defining PR. "The importance of defining PR - of explaining in clear and simple terms what it is that PR brings to the table - has never been greater than it is today.

"That's because as various communications disciplines converge, as corporate reputation and brand image begin to blur, as clients seek solutions that encompass paid and earned and owned and shared media and engage multiple stakeholders, PR people find themselves competing with rivals from advertising, from digital, from other disciplines to offer critical insights, develop truly differentiated strategies, and to provide multichannel execution."

What an exciting industry. What an exciting time.

Engage Joe Public is part of Joe Public, which was Agency Group of the Year in the AdReview Awards in 2014.

ABOUT KERI-ANN STANTON

Keri-Ann Stanton is Head of Communications at M&N Brands.

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