

# Choosing a PR agency

Looking for a public relations agency?

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It's a difficult decision; we know. PR is a very difficult thing to define in absolute terms, and because of this feels like navigating a minefield in the dark as you go through the process of chemistry meetings and pitches.

The truth is that there's really no guarantee that a campaign will produce the desired results, and failure in this regard can make the retainer costs seem exorbitant. Conversely, a successful campaign can lift your brand image to untold heights and broad public awareness.

So, how do you mitigate the risks of choosing the wrong agency when you are faced with an array of pitches that all seem to promise you the world?

Here are a couple of questions you SHOULD be asking in chemistry meetings:

## **How will you measure my Return on Investment?**

Reporting in real terms will be vital in assessing the success or failure of your PR campaign. Without setting goals, benchmarks, and expected ROI based on sound Advertising Value Equivalence at the start of the campaign you will be unable to ensure that the agency delivers on their promises.

## **What clients do you have from my Industry?**

A great agency with top notch clients and a string of successful accounts could still lack the specific expertise to gain exposure for your business. Make sure that the agency you choose understands your industry and has existing contacts with relevant media agencies.

## **What part do I play in making this campaign work?**

Some agencies will create the impression that once appointed, they will drive the campaign and you will be able to sit back and relax. For a campaign to succeed you will need to be involved at every step; providing content, approving communications, conducting interviews, and interpreting reports.

## **Which media will target my audience best?**

You know the answer to this one, you know what magazines report on your industry, and are read by your target market. This is really PR 101, if this question stumps the agency representatives, then you know you are talking to the wrong agency.

## **Who will be working on my account?**

It's a classic move on the part of agencies worldwide; they send in the big guns to create the impression that you will be working with the agency director and the account directors. Seldom is this the case, you will usually be handed over to a team of junior and mid-level staff. Make sure you meet them at the chemistry

meeting because they are the people you will be dealing with on a daily basis.

## What about social media?

The boundaries of PR are becoming increasingly blurry nowadays with such a large emphasis being placed on customer relationship management via social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. That doesn't mean that traditional PR is obsolete but you cannot afford to contract a PR agency that does not have substantial experience with social media management.

So **give us a shout** to set up a chemistry meeting and find out what Wetpaint PR can do for your business

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