

Guide to

PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) FOR SMALL COMPANIES

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PRACTICAL SERVICES
for
BUSINESS DIRECTORS

Public Relations (or PR as it's more commonly called) covers a multitude of techniques and methods for raising your profile and publicising your offerings to your ideal target audience(s).

This can be through conventional mediums such as magazines, newspapers, on-line journals and exhibitions, or higher profile methodologies such as television, radio, and national billboards.

There are also some very effective techniques for web marketing such as Google and other pay per click (PPC) search engines. Viral Marketing is increasing in popularity with larger companies.

This is where the product or brand you are trying to advertise is wrapped inside some form of entertaining or amusing media (sometimes a game or competition with a good prize is also used). The most common format is an e-mail containing an MPEG video attachment (car manufacturers are particularly good at this). The idea is that friends will forward the mail onto each other so the message spreads of its own volition, in a similar way to a computer virus.

Which should you choose?

Virtually every business has a definable target market segments and several common mediums to reach them. Your company's marketing plan should clearly define the most cost effective medium to reach your target audience. Most businesses use common routes like newspapers, trade journals, website advertising and directories.

For this article we'll examine the typical costs of editorial versus the cost of advertising.

How it works and the costs involved

Fact: The cost of magazine advertising is far more expensive than editorial. With either method you'll need to select your publications carefully. You will need to know the readership figures and obtain rate cards to understand the advertising costs and gauge the best return on your investment. Let's look at advertising first...

Advertising

Once you have set your budget and decided the size of the advert(s) you'll need to create the design.

You can do this yourself (if you have the software and skills) and you can also gain some help from the magazine's art department for the layout (some are more willing than others). You can also use an agency to produce the advert for you.

You will need to decide on the copy (written message), a call to action (response), and some imagery to endorse your words. The copy is critical because you have a very limited amount of space and each word must be chosen carefully.

Once your advert is designed in the correct format, you will need to submit it. Many publications run "feature stories" throughout the year and you may want your submission to coincide with an appropriate "feature story". Check the publication's editorial feature list for the timing of articles that will complement your business.

What does it cost?

Costs vary depending on the frequency, readership figures, distribution area and whether the publication is paid for by advertisers or bought by the reader, but as a very rough guide a quarter page ad will cost around £500, a half page £900 and a whole page around £1,500.

For comparison purposes let's say you advertise in 4 magazines with a quarter page advert, i.e., £2000 excluding any cost to produce the design and layout. Now let's look at editorial.

Editorial

Assuming the research has been completed and the target publications have been established, editorial works in a slightly different way.

It's best if you look at producing a series of interesting articles and news that can be released throughout the year. Too many companies try to announce all of their interesting items in one big announcement and then have nothing left for the following months — it is far wiser to plan at least the next 3 releases!

You will need to call each magazine and establish who the right editorial contact is for your article. Take the time to introduce yourself and discuss the theme to ensure they would be willing to print it (they'll always reserve judgement until they've seen it) but ask for an agreement for the theme.

Then you need to write it — this is where a good copywriter can help you make even the duller subjects sound more interesting. Once written and proof checked you can submit to each of the magazines. Always follow-up to ensure they have received it and ask if they will run it.

Note — it's a good idea to send a picture with a piece of editorial, it will endorse your story and the magazine will prefer it. However be aware that many magazines will charge a colour separation fee of around £75 - £150!

How does the cost compare?

If you submitted your editorial to six magazines and four of them agree to run it, you would pay between £300 - £600 for the colour separation cost, plus the copywriters time (say £600), i.e. between £900 - £1,200 instead of £2,000 but consider the coverage differential as well as the saving.

Twice as much for half the price

The advertisement will only provide you with quarter of a page. The editorial will give you far more; typically half a page and sometimes two whole pages with a good size photograph!

In terms of magazine space — you can easily achieve £3,600 worth of exposure for around £1,200 of expenditure.

Christopherson Associates Public Relations Services include planning, designing, writing, managing and controlling PR campaign budgets of any size for businesses from the very small to the very large.

*If you are interested in our Public Relations (PR) Services please telephone us on **01225 480325** or use complete the contact form on our website www.practicalservices.co.uk to arrange a free discussion.*

*The author of this article is available for group presentations to your business or organization. If interested, please call us on **01225 480325** to arrange.*

See the downloads section of our website for similar guides for small business owners.

About Christopherson Associates

Christopherson Associates help business owners achieve their goals by providing a whole range of practical services.

These services include boosting profits, increasing sales and marketing activities, streamlining operations, installing Quality or IT systems, ensuring compliance with Health and Safety regulations or Employment legislation, raising finance, planning and implementing an exit strategy or helping with any business problem outside of the experience of the business owner.

All our associates are seasoned and mature business professionals with decades of relevant business experience either at board or director level of major companies or have run their own businesses.

They are well trained in working with business owners and take a highly practical approach to solving problems and enhancing your business by working closely with you every step along the way.

Other Free Guides available on the Downloads section of www.practicalservices.co.uk:

Getting The Most Out of a Limited Sales & Marketing Budget

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising for Small Companies

Sales for Small Companies

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