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What Can PR Do For My Business?

By Joe Perri
Joe Perri & Associates Pty Ltd

September 2016. “What can PR do for my business?” That’s the question I’m invariably asked at the first meeting with a prospective client, when in fact the real question should be “What can PR (or more accurately, media relations) do to help my business achieve its long term financial goals and objectives?”

Firstly, PR is the process of implementing a communications program between a business and those target groups that are essential for its future success and financial viability.

The essential component of the PR process is the articulation of how the relationship with the business can be of benefit to clients, suppliers, alliance partners, investors, potential investors, staff and the list goes on.

Drilling down a bit further into this definition, I would more appropriately define PR as the process of building and enhancing valuable business relationships.

A growing number of businesses (large and small) recognise the importance of PR and use it as a value-for-money process to inform their target groups about the organisation, its products and services.

It’s necessary to understand that the PR process is a component of the marketing strategy as it communicates the quality of client / stakeholder relationships, greater awareness and understanding of an organisation’s vision and its client value proposition.

- When compared to advertising, a well structured and implemented PR campaign can produce a greater and more effective impact – and at a lower cost.
- PR strategy has a vital role to play in promoting a business to its clients and potential clients.
- A PR strategy can help to drive sales by attracting new business and encouraging existing clients to maintain their relationship or refer business associates and family members to the organisation.
- PR can lift the brand, profile and reputation of a business in the market sector in which it operates.
- PR can minimise negative publicity as one of the best strategies for overcoming a crisis management situation is a history of positive headlines in the media.

Defining PR – Addressing the Confusion

Too many people often confuse PR with the sales and marketing process. PR creates and generates awareness – it doesn't sell products or services in the same way that newsletters, sponsorship, advertising, events, etc don't sell on behalf of a business.

In order to sell a product or service, a business needs distribution channels, competitive pricing and a compelling client value proposition.

Unfortunately, many businesses try to align PR to sales Key Performance Indicators and as a result, the PR process is often a poor second or third in a list of spending priorities behind advertising and other sales promotional activities in an organisation's marketing plan and budget.

Nor is it appropriate to try and link PR to sales and marketing KPIs as the process cannot directly contribute to sales and profits – but what it does contribute is:

- Greater and more enhanced brand and business awareness
- Reputation
- Relationships
- Trust