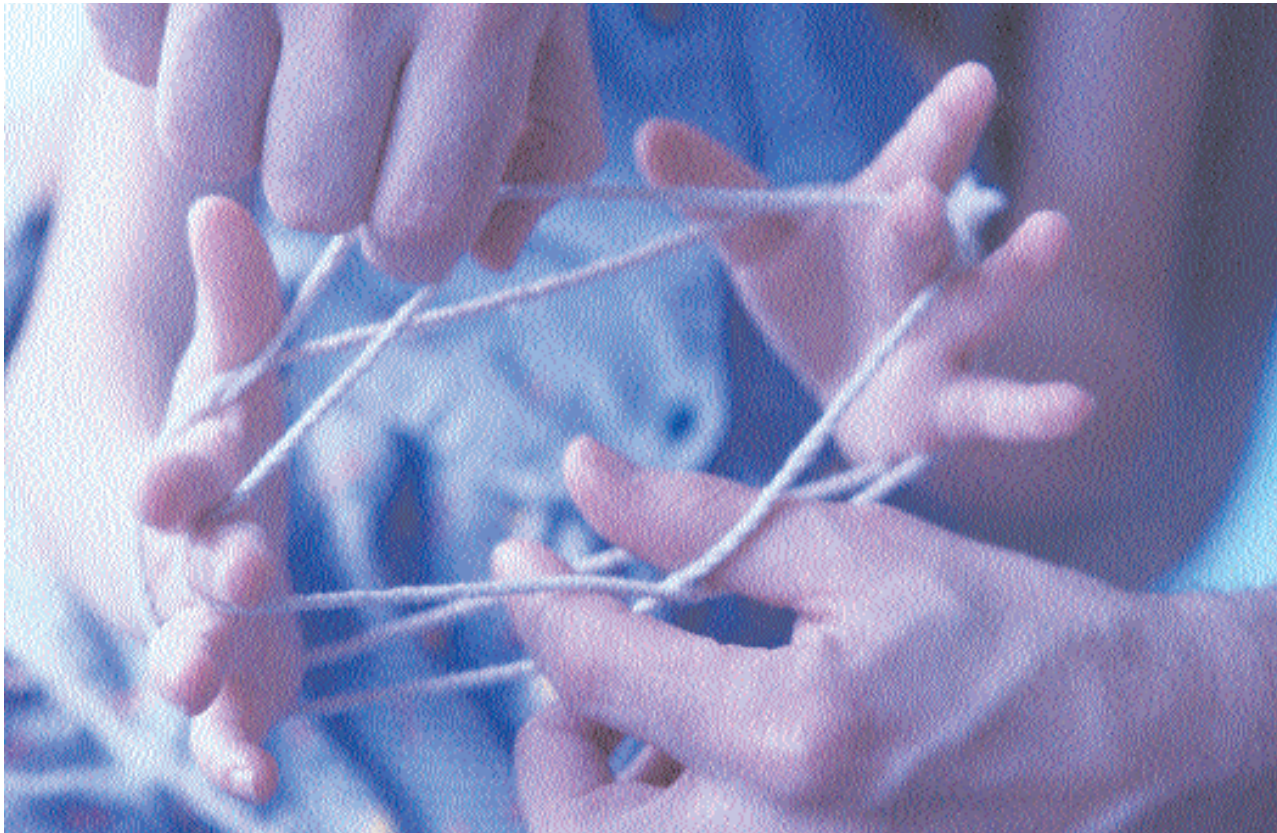


THE AMAZON GUIDE TO

# Working with a PR agency



Your PR agency team should be an extension of your own, with clear communications ensuring that you always share the same information and work together towards the same goals. This guide outlines the principles for an effective partnership with your agency, based on Amazon's extensive experience of working with a wide range of charity and public sector clients.

## The golden principles

Like all human relationships, the rapport between a client and their PR agency works best when certain principles are followed.

### **Communication**

Information needs to be shared, not only at the inception of a project, but continuously, throughout its duration.

### **Clarity**

Public relations work is most successful when there is a clear idea of what it should achieve, and this idea is communicated to all parties involved in carrying it out.

### **Partnership**

Think of your PR team as part of your own in-house team, complementing your strengths and contributing valuable expertise to achieve your goals.

### **Trust**

Working with a PR agency needs to be an open and honest process built on mutual respect and trust.



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At Amazon, our relationship with our clients is very important to us. We take pride in making ourselves an indispensable part of your team and putting you at the centre of everything we do.

# Briefing your agency



The briefing process is one of the most important steps towards making sure that your work with an agency is successful. A good briefing should include both written material and face to face discussion, to ensure that your agency has a good grasp of exactly what you're looking for and any background factors which may need to be taken into account.

Elements to include in a briefing include:

- What you want to achieve
- Who you want to communicate with
- Your priority messages and ideas
- Any relevant background
- Your budget

For more detailed information about the process of briefing an agency, see *The Amazon Guide to Writing a PR Brief*.

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At Amazon, we work closely with our clients to get to the heart of their brief. We believe that getting to know your environment, aspirations and constraints in detail will allow us to deliver results that surpass your ambitions.

# Getting started

Before starting on activity, it's important to get together and establish some basic principles.

## Strategy

You may already have a PR strategy in place. Or you might want to work with your agency to define what you want to achieve and why. Taking a strategic approach will help you to target your activities more closely to make sure they produce the effect you want.

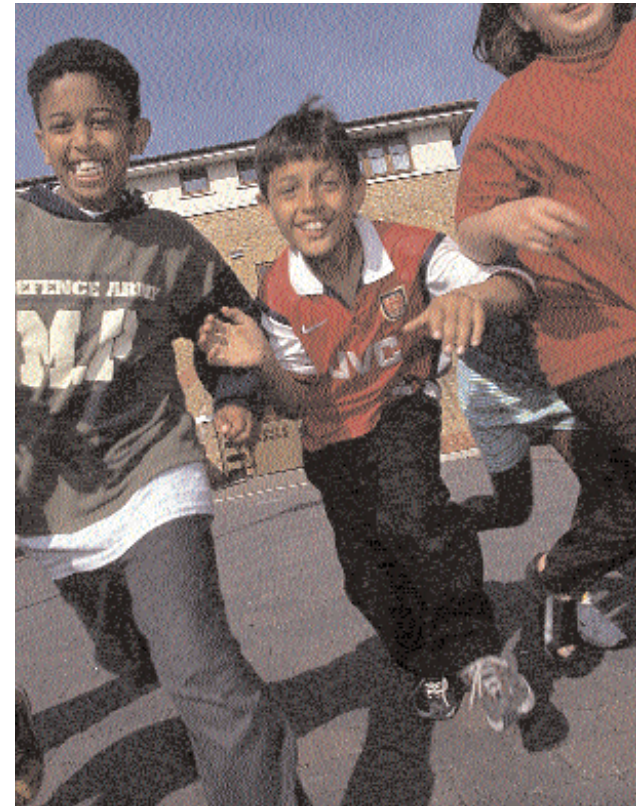
## Activity plan

Whether your PR activity takes the form of one short-term campaign or a long-term programme, you will need a plan of what has to take place when to achieve the best results. There's no point expecting coverage in a monthly magazine if you haven't approached them in line with their publication schedule, for example, and plenty of notice is important to secure venues for events. You will need to work with your agency to plot all the key dates in your calendar, and make sure all activity is scheduled in at the right time.

## Responsibilities and approval processes

Before any activity begins, it's important to sit down and work out who should be responsible for different areas of work. Setting this information out in advance will save confusion later.

Your agency team is likely to draft materials such as press releases and quotes on your behalf during the course of your work together. It's important that the process for approving these materials should be clear and as straightforward as possible. Delays could result in opportunities being lost, so think about who really needs to have the final say and who can deputise for them.



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At Amazon, we pride ourselves on being responsive above all else. All our processes are built around your requirements and the way you work. We believe each of our clients is unique and deserve our fully focused commitment.

# Day to day contact

Clear and regular communication and good working relations are vital to your partnership with your PR agency - just as within your own office.

## **Sharing information**

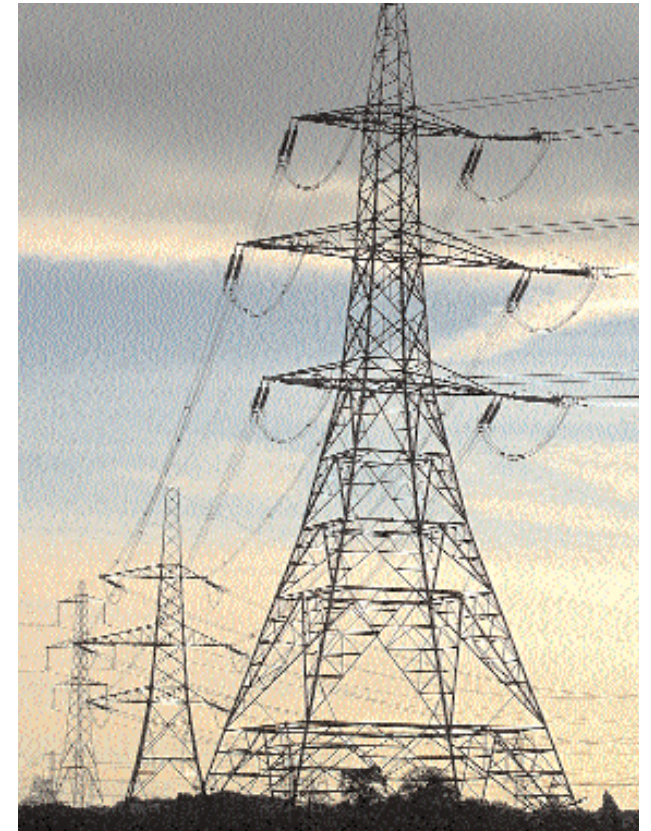
Working with an agency should be a close and open partnership, so share as much information as possible. Your agency team will be able to respond to your requirements much more successfully if you make sure they are equipped with all the relevant facts.

Copy your agency team in on e-mails and pick up the phone to keep them posted on the latest office updates. That way, you can be sure that the work they do for you will fully reflect your current priorities. They will be happy to sign a confidentiality agreement to cover any sensitive information.

## **Meetings, feedback and reporting**

You will need to decide with your agency team how often they report back to you on their activity and its results. This will be dictated to some extent by the size and duration of the project. On a shorter project requiring intense activity, detailed weekly reports and regular meetings might be required. Other campaigns, where activity is spread over longer periods, might only require monthly reports, with additional updates and meetings at busy times.

It is important for an agency to know your reaction to what they do for you, so they can secure the best possible results for you. Don't leave it until the end of the campaign - let them know about feedback, positive or negative, as you go along.



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Feedback from Amazon clients has consistently confirmed what we like to think about ourselves - that our hands-on commitment to partnership makes us a great team to work with and translates into excellent results.

# Reviewing the process

Photographs from [www.third-avenue.co.uk](http://www.third-avenue.co.uk)



Any good PR agency will want to make sure its work is having the desired effect. Make sure your agency is clear about what you want to achieve before they start work, and catch up regularly to make sure you're on the right track.

It's always a good idea to meet to review progress face to face. That way, any questions can be cleared up and next steps established quickly.

## Evaluation

Evaluation should be tailored to your project and reflect your communications priorities. Is your campaign meeting the objectives you set for it? Are you getting the right messages across to the right audiences? Are your communications methods the most suitable ones for your purposes?

Analysing the media coverage you achieved will be a key part of most campaign evaluations. This may cover such elements as:

- Circulation
- Coverage type (e.g. news article, feature, opinion piece)
- Inclusion of key messages
- Tone (positive, negative or neutral)
- Whether spokespeople are quoted
- Whether case studies are used
- Call to action

It may also take in additional elements, such as comparing your brand recognition before and after a campaign, or additional visits to your website as a result of publicity. This might require additional services, such as opinion polls or independent media evaluation.

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We hope you found this guide useful. If so, you might want to look at our other guides: *The Amazon Guide to Hiring a PR Agency* and *The Amazon Guide to Writing a PR Brief*. For more information about working with Amazon, contact Louise Morriss on 020 7700 6952 or e-mail [info@amazonpr.co.uk](mailto:info@amazonpr.co.uk)