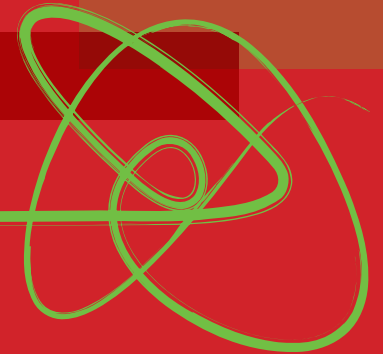


The Amazon guide to
**working with a
PR agency**

Amazon



The golden principles

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

Communication

Information needs to be shared, not only at the start 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 agency 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.

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

“The Amazon team have a flair for developing attractive campaigns and a commitment to delivering results that is truly outstanding.”

Kirstine Dunhill, Former Communications Manager, Send a Cow



Photo credit: Foundation66 by Paul Doyle

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.

Your briefing should 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.***



Photo credit: third-avenue.co.uk

“Amazon understand the challenges facing voluntary sector organisations. They are a joy to work with and totally reliable.”

Nick Sweet, Director of Corporate Services, Foundation66

Getting started

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

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 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 needs to take place at what time 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. You will need to work with your agency to plot all key dates and make sure all activity is scheduled in at the right time.

Responsibilities and approval processes

Before any activity begins it's important to work out who will 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, case studies, statements and briefings on your behalf. It's important that the process for approving these materials is clear and straightforward. Delays could result in opportunities being lost, so think about who really needs to have final say and who can deputise for them.

Working solely with not-for-profit organisations, we pride ourselves on being responsive and flexible. We believe each of our clients is unique and deserves our fully focused commitment.



Photo credit: Foresight by Paul Doyle

Day to day contact

Clear and regular communication is vital to your partnership with your PR agency – just as within your own office.

Sharing information

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 and updates.

Copy your agency team on e-mails and pick up the phone to keep them posted on the latest developments. 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.

Feedback from our 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.

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 – pass on feedback, positive or negative, as you go along.



Photo credit: MakeBelieve Arts by Paul Doyle

Reviewing progress

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 media coverage will be an important part of most campaign evaluations. This may cover things like:

- Circulation
- Inclusion of key messages
- Tone (positive, negative or neutral)
- Whether spokespeople are quoted
- Whether case studies are used
- Inclusion of URL or contact details

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.

By evaluating as you go along, you and your agency will be able to make adjustments if you need to. And you'll be better equipped to take advantage of new opportunities.



Photo credit: Northumberland Toy Library by Paul Doyle

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.*

Amazon

refreshingly real PR

Amazon is a public relations and communications agency working with clients in the public and voluntary sectors, and social enterprises. We create and deliver communications campaigns that raise awareness, transform the way people think and help to deliver real change.

We'd love to hear from you...

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