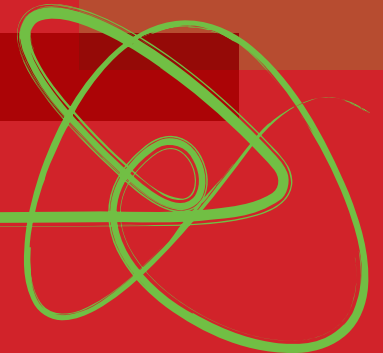


The Amazon guide to **writing a PR brief**

Amazon



What is a PR brief?

Working with a PR agency can bring enormous benefits, whatever your organisation.

It can help improve your profile with the right audiences, shape people's views and stir them into action. However, to achieve the right results you need to make sure your agency understands exactly what you're hoping to accomplish. Your reasons for employing an agency will always be unique, so it's important to pass on all the relevant information to make sure your agency knows your reasoning inside out. This is equally true if you're

inviting agencies to pitch for your business, starting on work with a newly appointed agency or even embarking on a new project with an established agency.

The best way of making sure an agency understands your thinking is to prepare a brief. This should encapsulate where you're coming from, where you want to get to and what considerations need to be taken along the way. There are many models for writing a brief, but here we'll outline one way of structuring a brief which will give an agency the information they need and allow you to communicate clearly, knowing you're on the same wavelength.

Writing a PR brief, especially for the first time, can appear daunting – but don't be put off. By following Amazon's structured approach, it should be easy to set out the information that will make your PR activity more effective.

"We're impressed by Amazon's insightful approach and understanding of the sector."

Sally Horrox, Marketing Director, NCT

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Photo credit: Northumberland Toy Library by Paul Doyle

The Amazon template

A comprehensive PR brief should include as many of the following points as possible:

Background

What has led you to this campaign or project?

Communications objectives

What are the specific goals you want to achieve through communications activity?

Target audiences

Who are you aiming to influence? Do you want to reach different groups for different reasons?

Communications channels

What are the best ways to reach your audiences?

Messages

What do you want them to understand or do as a result of your communications work?

Potential challenges

Are you aware of any difficulties which will need to be addressed?

Timescale

When do you want activities to happen? How long do you have to prepare?

Budget

How much do you have to spend? This may affect the choice of activities.

Evaluation

How will you judge if activity has been successful?

You may be looking for a PR agency to help you answer some of these questions using their experience and resources. If so, make this clear – agencies like Amazon will be happy to develop a brief in partnership with you.



Photo credit: Tendring Reuse and Employment Enterprise by Paul Doyle

What do you want to achieve?

Background

The first thing an agency needs to know is a little bit about your background. You may take for granted the unique situation of your organisation, but it's likely that people on the outside have less knowledge of the subtleties.

Provide as much information as you can to give your agency an understanding of where your organisation began and where it is today. Give an overview of what you do and the services you provide. You might like to include pointers on other organisations that operate in the same field and how you would like to appear distinct from them. If you can, include information on any other marketing or corporate plans your organisation may already have in place. PR campaigns work best when they reflect or complement overall organisational objectives.

Communications objectives

It helps to make clear from the outset exactly what you want to achieve from communications activity and make it as measurable as possible. You may have specific aims – such as recruiting a certain number of volunteers or reaching specific groups with information – or you may simply want to raise your profile within certain areas. Even if your goal is general awareness-raising, it helps to think through exactly how you would like people to perceive your organisation. As an innovative service provider? As a leading campaigning voice? Think about your ideal outcome and condense this into a few clear points.

Target audiences

Your audiences will depend on your objectives. You may have a clear idea of who you need to communicate with, with detailed demographic information on supporters, service users, policy-makers or commissioners. Or you may be looking for your agency to help define your priorities. Either way, sharing as much information as possible will help them devise activities to make sure the message hits the right target.



Photo credit: MakeBelieve Arts by Paul Doyle

You might be surprised. Many of our not-for-profit clients find that writing a brief down in black and white is highly rewarding and revealing. It can help clarify, for example, why certain PR activities may not have worked for you in the past or what really shapes your image in other people's eyes.

Getting your message across

Communications channels

This is another area where you may be looking for an agency to supply fresh ideas, but you may equally be clear already that the best way of communicating with your target audience is through the tabloid press, regional radio, social media or face to face.

Whatever your ideas, share them clearly for discussion.

Messages

Your exact messages may differ from campaign to campaign and may need further work to ensure they are attuned to your target audiences. However, giving your agency an idea of what you want to get across, in the form of a few bullet points, will help them work out the best method for communicating your aims.

Potential challenges

You may be aware of factors which could affect your work with an agency or the outcome of your campaign – for example policy changes, competitor activity or media fatigue with the issues you represent. By giving your agency warning of these factors, you will give them the best chance of planning around them to maximise your chances of success.

Based on the information you share, an agency may be able to suggest a completely new approach or ways of enhancing your existing approach. Working together closely and sharing information clearly will give you the best possible chance of mounting a successful PR campaign.

“With professionalism, commitment and integrity, Amazon contributed hugely in helping to take our work forwards.”

Jonathan Porritt, Former Chair, Sustainable Development Commission



Photo credit: Riverside Community Health Project by Jim McAdam

Thinking about delivery

Timescale

You may be looking for a year's worth of ongoing PR support or for help with a particular campaign over a shorter period. Letting an agency know the duration of your planned activity will give them an idea of what kind of tactics would be most effective – for example, a survey could be turned around in a couple of weeks, but may not get coverage at the right time in monthly magazines because they work several months in advance.

Budget

Your budget will dictate to an extent what kind of communications programme is possible – for example, a small budget may prevent you from holding a conference for 500 professionals, but might enable you to reach them by means of a specially designed booklet. Giving an agency this kind of information up-front will allow them to present you with effective but realistic ideas.

Evaluation

Honest evaluation must be at the heart of all PR campaigns. As the client, you must be able to judge the success or otherwise of activity and decide whether changes need to be made in future. Think about what success would look like for you and how it could be measured. Set clear criteria for reporting results early, as this will allow your agency to build your expectations into everything they do.

Other information

You may have additional information that you want to convey or other supporting documents which could clarify points. The more you can share, the closer your agency will come to creating a programme of activity that's just right for your needs.

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 working with a PR Agency](#).

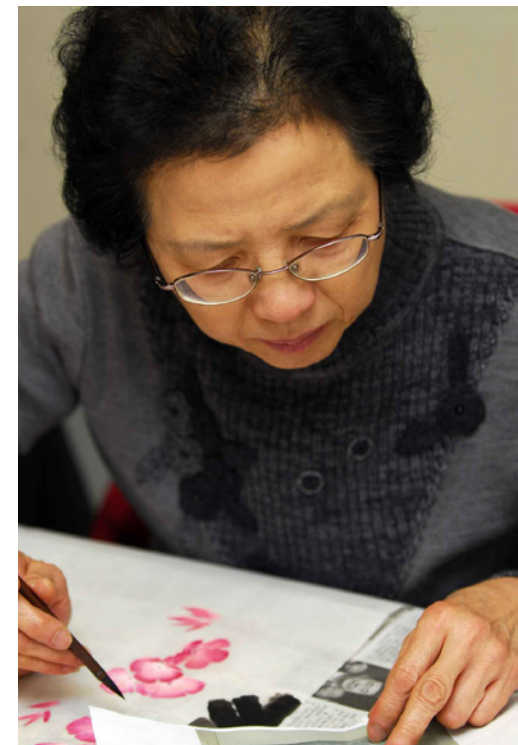


Photo credit: The Chinese Community Centre by Paul Doyle

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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