



The Amazon intro to **Public relations**

People often come to us with only a limited or a partial understanding of public relations, so we thought we'd create this short guide to answer a few of the most common questions.

We hope it's useful.



What is public relations?

Public relations is an odd term. It has been a recognised label since 1919, when Edward L. Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud, opened the first 'public relations' firm with Doris Fleischman. But even though it's been around for almost a hundred years, it is often misunderstood. Many different definitions have been applied and many people have come to think of public relations or 'PR' in only a narrow or piecemeal way.

A common misconception is that PR just means dealing with the media. In fact, the media is just one channel that can be used to reach various audiences. PR can also mean engaging with people face-to-face through events or consultations, and it can be used for a huge number of purposes.

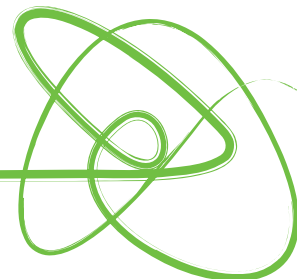
Many also think that PR is just about delivery, but in fact the research and strategic development to build and support communications activity falls within the remit of public relations as well.

Definition from Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR):

“The discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing behaviour and opinion.”

The functions falling under the PR banner primarily include:

- **Media relations campaigns / press office**
- **Events**
- **Audience research and segmentation**
- **Consultations**
- **Communications audits and strategy development**
- **Reputation management**
- **Issues mapping**
- **Copywriting for publications**
- **Building case study libraries**
- **Social marketing**
- **Celebrity engagement**
- **Stakeholder / partner engagement and management**
- **Community engagement**
- **Internal communications**
- **Media training**



How is PR different from advertising?

The main difference between advertising and PR is that while the former focuses on selling, public relations is all about informing, educating and engaging. PR also relates to a far wider range of communications than the more singular practice of advertising.

The two disciplines can work well together, though, in the form of integrated campaigns. Advertising can be far more successful when it appears after a PR activity has heightened awareness and understanding.

How could public relations help my organisation?

Public relations can help you and your organisation in many ways. If you're a charity, a social enterprise or a public body, these will include:

- Informing and educating
- Shifting perceptions
- Supporting fundraising
- Changing behaviour
- Recruiting support
- Protecting reputation
- Managing mergers/collaboration/restructuring
- Establishing new services
- Developing charity/corporate partnerships
- Evidencing impact

What's the difference between 'proactive' and 'reactive' PR?

Generally, the term 'proactive' is used to describe planned public relations activities that are driven by an organisation and stem from its own agenda. This can refer to engagement activity in the form of events, or to media relations campaigns, for example.

Reactive public relations usually refers to activity that is triggered by the actions of others, outside the organisation. It may still be partly planned, if, for instance, an organisation has prior warning that a government department will be launching a report or consultation on an issue of relevance, or if another organisation is planning a major announcement and the PR team plan activity to 'piggy-back' on, or react to, that announcement. But it may also be more ad hoc. For example, someone in your organisation might read something in the press one morning, which directly relates to an area of your work, and you will then react by putting out a statement in response, via social or traditional media, your own networks, or informal channels.

We hope this guide has expanded your understanding of PR and what it can achieve, if done well.

The value of PR shouldn't be underestimated, particularly in a difficult economic environment, when your organisation's work, reputation and relationships are more important than ever.

If you'd like to discuss how PR could benefit your organisation, please get in touch.

We work with clients in the voluntary and public sectors and social enterprises, creating and delivering 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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