

## **Glossary of Public Relations Terms**

Like most disciplines, Public Relations has acquired its own business practices and jargon, which can cause initial misunderstandings for the uninitiated. If you're a first-time user of PR consultancies, a good grasp of the terminology will help get the most out of the PR process.

### **A**

**Account team:** The team of agency staff assigned to a client programme. Generally consists of various members drawn from board director (overall strategy and top level advice); account director (team management and quality control); account manager (day-to-day programme management); senior account executive/account executive (execution of most day-to-day activities); and account assistant (research and admin support).

### **B**

**Brief:** the instructions from a client to a consultancy, or directions communicated within a PR agency.

**Broadcast:** the dissemination of programmes or messages through the media of radio, Internet or television.

**Brainstorming:** the creative process of group-thinking to stimulate or articulate ideas on a give subject or problem.

### **C**

**Client:** the organisation or person who employs a PR consultancy.

**Communication:** the credible, honest and timely two-way flow of information that fosters common understanding and trust.

**Competition:** other organisations that represent a threat to a particular business.

**Contract:** an agreement made between the PR consultancy and the client covering areas of agreed objectives, timing, service levels and price.

**Copy:** the text produced by a consultancy for a press release or article. Journalists also refer to their news stories or features as copy.

**Corporate Communications:** Public relations for a corporation, integrated as part of the company's strategic objectives.

**Corporate Social/Environmental Responsibility (CSR):** Taking positive action to show an organisation has a responsible attitude to the people and environment it impacts on. Community relations may take the form of social outreach programmes designed to build relations and foster understanding of the role of business in the local community. The role of PR in CSR is to communicate effectively in order to build corporate accountability and transparency.

**Credentials:** Either the published information consultancies provide to prospective clients or an initial no-cost presentation of the consultancy's capabilities.

**Crisis Management:** Having a communications plan in place that can be effectively put into action when something goes wrong for a company or organisation. For instance, how a product recall will be handled.

**Cutting:** an extract from a newspaper or magazine that makes reference to the client. Also commonly referred to as "clipping".

**Cue sheet:** briefing notes to help a spokesman prepare for an interview with a journalist. The cues should cover the issues that are likely to arise in the interview and approach that should be taken on these issues.

## **E**

**e-PR:** Also known as online PR, this involves communications using the Internet/new technology to communicate with stakeholders. This could include tactics from using the company website effectively, to a "word-of-mouth" campaign using email (known as viral marketing).

**Editorial:** written materials composed to communicate key messages to the various audiences identified by the client and consultancy.

**Embargo:** a warning to the media not to publish a news item until the date specified on the release.

**Evaluation:** The continuous process of measuring the impact of a PR campaign from start to finish.

**Expenses:** The charges consultancies make for expenditure incurred on client programmes, such as print, travel, telephones, mailing costs, and so on. Usually charged monthly in arrears against agreed budgets and often with some items subject to standard consultancy mark-ups.

**Exclusive:** a news story offered by a PR practitioner to a single newspaper title, radio, website, or TV station.

**Exposure:** the extent to which the target audience becomes aware of a person, message, activity, theme or organisation through the efforts of PR.

## F

**Feature article:** a broad or in-depth newspaper, magazine, Internet, radio or TV article that discusses, analyses or interprets an issue, subject or trend. A feature generally takes longer to research and produce than a news story.

**Fees:** The charge consultancies make for the time of the executive staff working on client programmes, usually invoiced in regular instalments monthly or quarterly in advance and monitored through daily timesheets.

**Financial PR:** the efforts of a publicly-held company, or one that is on the way to a public flotation, to communicate with shareholders, security analysts, institutional investors and stock exchanges.

**Full Service:** a one-stop PR shop which incorporates clients from many different industry sectors and which offers a range of PR disciplines, and sometimes in-house design and other services.

## I

**Integrated campaign:** a multidisciplinary approach which uses a number of marketing communications techniques in order to deliver a consistent set of messages. The aim is to achieve seamless communication with the audience.

**Internal communications:** communicating with employees and shareholders to inform them of change (for instance during a company merger), keep them up to date with company news and developments, or to help achieve corporate objectives.

## L

**Logo:** a graphic or symbol owned by and representing a company or brand.

## M

**Media relations:** dealing with journalists and building good working relationships with the broadcast, print and online media.

**Messages:** agreed words or statements that a client wants to convey to third parties, like the media or shareholders, for example.

**Media:** channel for the communication of information including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, mobile phones and the Internet.

## N

**News conference:** the live dissemination of news information by an organisation to invited media. The format is usually a presentation of information by the organisation followed by a question and answer session. Also known as a press conference.

## P

**Pitch:** A full presentation of a recommended public relations programme, carefully researched and costed, which usually takes at least four weeks to prepare. Some consultancies reserve the right to charge a fee if not subsequently appointed.

**Press pack/kit:** a branded pack handed out to the media by an organisation. It normally contains background material, photographs, illustrations and news releases.

**Press office:** A press office handles all media enquiries and puts out all company messages or press releases - to the media on behalf of the organisation. This may be an in-house function or outsourced to a PR consultancy.

**Press release:** a written communication sent to all news media. Also known as a news release.

**Proposal:** document outlining a proposed PR campaign to an existing or potential client.

**Public Affairs:** the process of communicating an organisation's point of view on issues or causes to political audiences like MPs and lobbying groups.

## S

**Sector/trade press:** the media relevant to specific audiences. This includes special interest magazines such as hi-fi enthusiasts. Trade journals are read for business and professional reasons, for example electronics engineers read Electronics Week.

## T

**Teaser:** a promotion that is intended to arouse interest in the main campaign which follows.

**Transcript:** written outline of a radio or broadcast about a client.

## V

**Vertical Media:** media relating to different market sectors for a product or service. For example, you can promote a barcode printer in the printing media, packaging media and food retailing media.

**Viral Campaign:** a communications campaign which is designed to exploit the potential of the internet to spread messages rapidly. The audience is encouraged to pass a message on to all of their email contacts.