5 Golden Benefits of PR



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Public relations is a common buzz-phrase in business language today, but too few industry professionals actually grasp its true meaning, and how to make it reap maximum benefits. First and foremost, PR is not the same as marketing, and it's entirely different than advertising. Put simply, it is a strategic communications tool that, when done right, adds value to your company's image and reputation. But unlike advertising, you cannot pay for that particular value; instead, you build it carefully, using different tactics to get the most important messages out there.

PR is:

• A critical tool for managing how the public sees a particular company, how it feels about a brand and to maintain a positive image with customers, stakeholders, investors and

media.

• Especially critical in times of crisis and adverse events.

• Entirely different than advertising or marketing. Done best, it’s organic and authentic, making it arguably the most effective tool among the three for building brand awareness.

• A vital tool in, slowly but surely, reaching business goals and enhancing revenue.

Many companies, however, are still not aware of how greatly they could benefit from PR — many more are unclear about creating a solid strategy.

A powerful image management tool

Public relations is capable of nothing less than making or breaking a business. Those who do it well will naturally reach a larger audience (without having to spend a fortune on advertising), and its early process is relatively straightforward: The PR team creates a specialized communication plan to build solid and loyal relationships with a target audience. Usually, this consists of releasing and distributing information about the company to the public — which includes prospective customers, stakeholders, investors and partners. Strategizing involves consideration of content, how to write it and which media to use for its distribution.

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PR is more than just promoting a business

This family of strategized messaging is not just about promotion, it’s about going in the right direction with storytelling, and via that process creating better brand awareness.

As well all know, nothing beats good press, but the story you tell must feel authentic and organic, qualities you typically do not get with advertising. A good PR team will promote the brand using editorial content in magazines, newspapers, news channels and blogs… thus getting third-party validation, and so audience trust.

Basic types

PR is a complex tool, and depending upon goals desired, it can be applied in the following categories:

• Media relations

• Investor relations

• Marketing communications

• Government relations

• Community relations

• Internal relations

• Customer relations

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Its five most important benefits

Which of the above categories to embrace depends on both goals and the type of message companies wish to get across. However, they all offer the same advantages.

• PR increases brand credibility: PR publicity is uniquely valuable because it generates brand credibility, but in order to do that, content has to be authentic and have informational or educational value – be genuine and honest instead of

promotional.

• It attracts a target audience: A nicely written magazine article will do much more for a brand than an advertisement in the same media outlet. The reason is simple: it is the most effective approach to winning and retaining a target market. And if you use various outlets to get a message across, less time will be required to reach goals.

• It provides added value: To beat the competition today, companies need to find ways to stand out from the rest of the crowd, and PR is an excellent tool to do that – to put you in the forefront of a particular market niche by distributing genuine and valuable information to the public. With this value-rich messaging, you increase your visibility, personalize the brand, manage reputation and build solid relationships. You give, you get: the proverbial win-win!

• It will generate both short- and long-term lead generation: Boosted credibility and reputation inevitably results in new sales leads. Winning messages combined with well-crafted call-to-action components work in dependably profitable synergy.

• It builds brand image: The truth is, you cannot simply *buy* a positive image. Instead, you need to find an authentic way to build one to engage a target audience and turn it into customers. Public relations is a dependable way of doing that.

One last fact to keep in mind: You should not expect fast results, however professionally crafted your strategy is. These come with time, using a long-term and both goal- and detail-oriented process.

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