Do You Need a PR or Marketing Professional? Here's the Difference

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So often, we hear the phrase "I need to invest in a marketing professional to….." and whatever follows that phrase is usually one of two things. They are either looking to boost their revenue and make more money or trying to create a reputation for their brand online that doesn't seem to be falling into place for them solo.

While these two seem interchangeable, they require two different services and often different professionals.

I am talking about public relations and marketing.

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How is your public perception?

Whether you have a personal brand, a small business, or you're an executive for a large company, the way you present yourself is a make or break in your professional success.

It's all about public perception, and public relations professionals are the experts in creating the perfect plan for your brand to thrive.

Taylor Swift's ascension from a regular celebrity to a cultural force of nature is a great example of public relations in action.

We have seen headline after headline about her dedicated fanbase and the excitement around almost anything she does. Why? She and her team have crafted the specific narrative for her brand, and they make it a point to ensure the media portrays it as such.

Behind the scenes, we didn't see the hard work and careful planning it took to build relationships, secure media appearances, and map out the desired image to present to the public.

All thanks to her publicist.

On that note, reputation crisis management is a huge part of what public relations professionals do. As an individual or brand grows in popularity, it is only a matter of time before something happens that puts its reputation at risk. This can be a scandal, a product recall, or a viral customer complaint. If you spend time on social media, you know that one small issue can become a major problem for your brand overnight.

This is where public relations experts come in – to do damage control and change the narrative.

Just like celebrities, brands need to develop a reputation with their audience. This behind-the-scenes reputation-building can ultimately be what makes the brand successful or not.

Without the right branding, you cannot develop the correct message, leading to the wrong marketing.

Ask yourself this question: Is your online reputation strong, or does it need work?

Related: Should You Start With PR or Marketing First?

Marketing comes into the picture to get results

Never underestimate the power of a great marketing plan. Investing in a marketing professional is imperative for brands even with the slightest marketing knowledge.

Marketing professionals are important for two reasons: one, to clarify your brand message, and two, to increase your sales by pushing out content to your target audience.

Now, if you are thinking to yourself, “Is that all?” those two priorities alone consist of a variety of tasks such as:

- Growing your audience and building a community around your brand.
- Finding ways to get your name out there through advertising.
- Developing new campaigns or repurposing old ones.
- Managing the entirety of your content process.
- Optimizing all of your pages and content for SEO.
- Handling influencer collaboration with your brand.
- Analyzing the data to continue to improve each campaign and stay relevant with your audience.

The reason is that a marketer’s job is to come in and create a strategy that involves content, design, and visibility that will align with your brand image and the audience you have acquired. Without a clear picture of what they are selling, your message will fall on deaf ears.

The marketing world is changing every day with new trends, technology, and communities to join. There are a vast amount of avenues to keep up with, and you can’t let your image falter in any community you are a part of.

That’s where marketers come in.

On top of that, as we have seen in the last decade, consumer preferences and actions have changed drastically. To keep your brand relevant and ranking #1 on every search engine, you need someone who knows how to navigate this world efficiently.

Marketers are driven by the results they achieve, and when they have a clear picture, their job becomes much easier.

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How PR and marketing go hand in hand

Public relations and marketing go hand in hand and complement each other to achieve a similar end goal. These goals are creating brand awareness, building a positive reputation, and ultimately increasing sales.

For example, a strong PR campaign takes the first steps in creating a buzz in the media and potential customers, while marketing campaigns use this buzz to drive sales and increase a brand's visibility.

So, remember, they are not the same, but they are both essential pieces of the puzzle for any successful brand.

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