

What does public relations mean to you?

 By [Liesl Simpson](#)

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Many companies have a perception of what public relations (PR) is. More often than not, they confuse PR with marketing and branding with advertising.



Image credit: Headway on Unsplash.

A key challenge that PR agencies face is presenting and explaining what PR is and the value derived from engaging with a PR partner. So, what are some of the perceptions of PR, what is it in reality and how can it help your business?



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We already have a marketing department that does this...

The most common phrase used by prospective clients before an explanation can be provided on PR is as follows: "We already have marketing person/department that does our advertising and website."

Although PR is a component of the greater marketing bouquet of services, PR does not fulfil all of these departments' functions. This lack of understanding often flows through the entire organisation.



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Public relations – defined

Wikipedia has a lovely definition of [PR](#). It is described as the practice of managing the spread of information between an

individual or an organisation. The description continues for another paragraph or two and by the third sentence, confusion sets in.

The promise of PR

In short, PR creates a profile for your company in the media, highlights its product, solutions and intellectual capital that resides within the organisation. It increases your Google search rankings and provides a platform for customer testimonials.

All of this complements your marketing efforts and the company's overall objectives in getting their name 'out-there'. Importantly, it influences the decision of a prospective client to engage with your business instead of your competitors.

To PR or not to PR

Unfortunately, it is usually the companies that reject PR that need it the most. When a company experiences financial difficulties, PR is one of the first budgets to be cut. Even when these companies end up understanding the concept, they find themselves questioning the value PR can bring to their company.

PR can assist with negative media. When a PR and communications strategy is in place, the company would already have a positive reputation in the media and their industry which can soften the 'blow'.



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Additionally, the PR agency would also have a plan in place to off-set the negative focus in a proactive manner. However, the main goal of PR is to build a business's reputation.

The value of PR lies in the picture it depicts of your company. For example, a smaller company can be positioned as a larger, more formidable business with significant knowledge and experience.

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A post shared by [One PR India \(@oneprindia\)](#) on Aug 20, 2019 at 12:30am PDT

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It's all about telling your story in your own words

PR allows a company to shape the perception of their business in a positive manner by reaching the appropriate target markets through the media. It tells the story of the company, its value proposition, the company culture and why it exists.



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It provides a platform for customers to tell the intended target markets how great the business is and, importantly, creates top of mind awareness. Keep this in mind next time somebody calls and asks if you require a PR agency.

ABOUT LIESL SIMPSON

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