

Understanding the difference between marketing and public relations

 By [Minnie-lee Tagwirei](#)

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Most people do not know where to draw the line between PR and marketing hence I have constantly found myself trying to distinguish the not so obvious differences between PR and marketing.



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It is important for a start-up to jot down its goals before approaching either a marketing or a PR agency that way it is clearer which one you need to be working with.

Sometimes you need both but depending on your goals you might realise that you need to engage with just one.

First, let me start by defining public relations; it is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between the organisation and their public, according to Wikipedia. We can derive the meaning from the words themselves.

PR is the flow of information between company and clients

Public relations is about how the public views the company. It is about how the company maintains relationships with its stakeholders. It is about the image of the company, it is the way the company engages with its customers, non-customers, and its stakeholders. It is the smooth flow of information between the company and the clients, or potential clients or people that are not even interested in the company. Public relations involves messaging and strategic communications and reputation management.

On the other hand, marketing is all about sales! Sales, sales and more sales. Marketing is what makes the product or service attractive to the customer. Marketing is all about promotions, direct marketing and advertising which seeks to return direct sales.

Marketing is driven by the desire to create sales

Marketing reaches current and potential customers. It is driven by the desire to create sales. It centres around the product,

promotion, the price, and the place. It revolves around that specific product launch or that specific promotion and it is usually a short-term campaign.

The results of marketing are determined by the sales. It's all about the "return on investment." But whilst marketing goals are to increase sales, PR goals are to create a good company image and develop good relationships with the different people. PR communicates and protects the brand. It creates a favourable operating climate. It is about the company; the brand and it normally takes a long time to achieve tangible results.

Whilst a lot of paid media is involved in marketing, with PR it's usually about articles, press conferences, social media posts, appearances, charity work, speeches and PR events. PR is the story behind the company; it drives authenticity because it delivers a legitimate message whereas marketing says: "We are amazing."

PR normally has a long-lasting impression on its target audience

Once you hire a PR agency you can expect them to be writing press releases, pitching positive stories to the media, securing speaking opportunities at industry events, securing interviews, building relationships with the media and influencers, managing and updating company messages, speaking to the press about a company crisis.

Whereas a marketing agency will be working on an ad campaign for a new product, buying advertising slots, creating supporting materials for a new product, drafting a weekly newsletter, drive the direction of a marketing campaign. The marketing agency is also responsible for all sales campaigns and tracking the sales.

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