

# PR vs Advertising: Which is ideal for marketing SMMEs?

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2 Mar 2021

Public relations and advertising are both crucial for the promotion of any business. With the pandemic generating fear and doubts for small businesses, the question arises - which one is more cost-effective and lucrative for Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in 2021?



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Although PR and advertising possess similar goals, both public relations and advertising are very important to use for marketing purposes in 2021. They normally function optimally when used simultaneously. However, in 2021, most SMMEs are in the rebuilding phase with limited budget for marketing their businesses.

When it comes to creating brand awareness, there are two things that SMMEs are presently looking for in 2021: a brand awareness campaign that will bring in leads and save them money at the same time. Both PR and advertising are capable of doing so.

The question is, which one is more effective?

## Difference in costs

In 2021, Public relations offer SMMEs access to marketing services on a national level. When PR is done through an agency, SMMEs only pay an agency fee, exposing them to as many national and community papers, magazines, TV and

radio stations in the country.

Advertisement in 2021 is costly for SMMEs because you pay an agency fee to create an ad, pay for the ad to be on TV and radio or newspapers and magazines. Although this option is expensive, it allows SMMEs to control the content they put in an advert as opposed to PR.

PR is content marketing and advertising is strictly marketing. For PR to work, journalists must be persuaded by the strong newsworthy content relating to product or services of an SMME, but advertising to work an SMME must just have the right budget.

### **Bringing in leads and sales**

To answer the question relating to which method of marketing an SMME brings leads and sales in 2021, we have to understand that both methods work. The fast way to bring sales and leads as an SMME is to have both advertising budget and PR budget. They complement each other more than they compete with each other.

Public relations is more effective to achieve this role simply because it is content driven. People normally buy papers and magazines to read the content in these media other than to read adverts.

However, PR takes longer to yield results compared to adverts. At The DCF, we normally ask for a minimum of three months to turn TV and radio interviews plus print articles into leads. PR takes longer because most media do not allow PR articles to have contact details in them since these media houses rely on adverts to make profits.

Ads like outdoor media (street posters and billboards) remain stronger because of the repetition they instil in our subconscious minds. For example, you see a billboard every day on your way to work or gym, the brand advertised lives in your mind rent-free for the longest time throughout the day.

For affordability and long-term positive impact, PR is the answer for your SMME in 2021. For an immediate solution, advertising is the answer for your SMMEs in 2021. For the best results, however, using both advertising and PR efforts in 2021 is the winning formula for SMMEs.

## **ABOUT MKHUSELI VANGILE**

Mkhuseli Vangile is the managing director of the DCF, a vibrant PR and marketing agency.

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