

The Benefits of Hiring a Public Relations Agency

✘ By David E. Johnson, CEO, [Strategic Vision PR Group](#)

One of the age old questions about [public relations](#) has always been, do I need an outside public relations service provider or can I do it in house or by myself? This question has never become more meaningful than in this age of Google, the 24/7 news cycle, and social media. The answer is yes for a variety of reasons.

The first reason that comes to mind is cost in money and time. In business everything revolves around the bottom line. In this alone it is smarter to retain a public relations agency. Public relations is not just press releases, press conferences, and media appearances. It also includes the social media aspect of maintaining a company's blog, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) page. This would require several salaried people. In terms of salary alone, you are losing out as with a retainer with a public relations agency you have a team of professionals on your account that handle each aspect of that public relations campaign. For small and medium sized organizations the savings is even greater. Not only are you saving money, you are saving time and remember time is money. There are not enough hours in the day for a small or medium sized business to do everything that needs to be done. And time away from your core business means lost opportunities. In retaining a public relations agency, you have their team assigned to your account handling your social media, your media coverage, your branding, and your press releases while you do what you do best – run your business.

Just as you go to a doctor or a lawyer because of their ✘ expertise that is yet another reason to hire an outside public relations service provider. Just as you are the expert

in your field, the personnel at a public relations agency are the experts in their field. They bring their expertise in writing, in social media, media relations, branding, and special events to the plate. They know public relations. They know how to position a client for the maximum exposure. They have the contacts with the media. They know which reporters will cover which topics and also how to package a story that the media wants. Many people think of an interview in terms of sales, it isn't. If a reporter suspects someone is just trying to sell them something through their story it will never see the light of day. An experienced public relations expert knows how to package a story so that it is newsworthy to the reporter while still being of marketing benefit to a client.

Public relations agencies know to think of all public relations contingencies including when disaster strikes a client and how to begin planning for any event. Businesses always have a plan for when a crisis strikes in how to handle things except in the terms of publicity. Working with an agency means a preliminary crisis communications plan has been developed beforehand that can then be altered to fit the crisis. Agency personnel have the skills and experience to objectively evaluate your business, clearly assess its strengths and weaknesses, and figure out how to use them in crisis communications.

Public relations agencies are familiar with and use all of the public relations tools available to generate attention for their clients. These tools include pitches, press releases, media kits, media interviews, seminars, webinars, social media, ezines, and more. Many people don't know the difference between a media pitch and a press release. A press release has a definite format and conventional style. It's written in a journalistic tone and is on specific news be it a new hire, a new product launch, or any specific related news. A media pitch, on the other hand, has the main

objective of catching a reporter's attention – enough to want to call you for an interview, product demonstration, or whatever call to action you've indicated. It has all the most important information, but not all the details. It isn't a complete story. Rather it's a teaser for a story. A public relations agency knows the difference and how to use both to their client's benefit. Finally many unless they are with a public relations agency don't understand the importance of a media kit. A media kit includes information on a company, product or service, includes FAQ's, bios of key company personnel, pictures that can be used in news stories, and a sampling of previous media coverage. It is essential to any public relations campaign. Unknown to many is the fact that if you don't have a media kit, most of the major media won't touch you. The major media grades potential guests and interviews on a scale of 1 to 10 without a media kit, you don't get beyond one. A public relations agency knows how to develop and constantly maintain a media kit.

There are other reasons to work with an outside agency. By bringing in someone from the outside you are bringing in someone who can be more objective and doesn't have the emotional commitment and blinders that an owner or company employee has. A public relations agency tends to be more creative in developing story ideas and teasers to induce the media and can think outside the corporate box. An agency constantly monitors the news and often sees opportunities that others don't. For example our company represented a marriage counselor and when the Eliot Spitzer story broke, went into pitching mode to have our client discuss why powerful men cheat which resulted in coverage on CNN, HLN, and Oprah. An agency knows how to make use of the news to a client's benefit.

The answer to whether you need an outside public relations vendor is quite simple. Yes. An outside public relations agency saves money and time, they have the expertise, they

know how to employ the tools needed for your public relations campaign to succeed and having them do the public relations allows you to do what you do best – your business.

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