

# Find the Right Company & People When Hiring A PR Firm



The decision to engage a communications firm is consequential for a number of reasons. While the first may be cost, more important, the firm will be responsible for preserving, protecting and growing a company's most valuable

assets – its brand and reputation.

When it comes to searching for a communications partner, [CommunicationsMatch](#) is a powerful starting point for finding firms and professionals with matching industry and communications expertise, as well as by location and size.

The site will get you quickly and efficiently to a list of firms with capabilities that match your needs. Once you have a shortlist of companies you will need to evaluate both the company and people working on your account.

**PR** is ultimately a people business. Getting the right fit is essential to the success of the relationship.

In the selection process, from a prospective client's standpoint, face-to-face meetings are critical. They need to include the account executives you will be working with. Based on these meetings you will need to be able to answer the

following questions in the affirmative.

- Is the experience of your account person/team a good match for your business?

Increasingly, communications is a team activity with an account executive bringing together the firm's resources to meet a client's needs. The size of the team will be directly related to the scale of the project and/or firm. A generalist or combination of experts may be critical to the success of a project. It's important to understand the team's background and experience with similar projects.

- Have they listened to and understood your needs?

In meetings and presentations you will want the account team to clearly demonstrate that they have heard and understand your business' challenges and objectives.

- Do they have good and implementable ideas that make sense for your business?

Agencies and consultants may be wary of sharing ideas before they are hired. In some cases, a firm may request a fee to develop a fully-fledged proposal (Not an unreasonable request if a company asks them to present). Other firms may be willing to get into details. In either case, it is important to understand from the account team their view of the opportunities to tell your story.

- Is this a firm you feel you want to work with?

Of all the questions, this is the most nebulous. Chemistry is hard to pin down, but you know it when you feel it.

A communications firm's industry sector and communications capabilities are the foundation of a relationship. But as in any relationship, the people you will work with matter a lot. The right firm and people are key to a successful engagement.

*About the Author: Simon Erskine Locke is Founder & CEO of [CommunicationsMatch™](https://www.communicationsmatch.com), a world-leading communications-focused matching search engine. With more than 4,500 U.S. and International agencies and professionals listed, it is a go-to resource for businesses seeking communications services providers with expertise in areas including: public relations, internal communications, government affairs, investor relations, content marketing, social media, SEO, website development, photography and video. Prior to founding CommunicationsMatch, Locke held senior Corporate Communications roles at Prudential Financial, Morgan Stanley and Deutsche Bank and founded communications consultancies.*

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