

B2B Public Relations

**Why B2B Public Relations is More
Complex Than B2C**

Introduction

Many business and technology companies operating in B2B environments are not resourced as well in areas of marketing and public relations as their B2C cousins.

Marketing in B2C is very visible, as it often involves mass media engagement with both advertising and public relations. The lack of B2B marketing visibility can lead to situations where public relations is not fully exploited, simply because it is more 'out of sight, out of mind'

Key Differences

How is B2B marketing and public relations different from B2C and how can you best leverage it?

1. It's about solutions, not features.

Buyers of B2B products want to be told about solutions – what the product or service will do for them and how it will help them run their business better.

2. There are multiple decision-makers.

In B2B, the PR program must touch multiple decision-makers - and acknowledge or address each of their needs and motivations.

3. There are many, rather than few, messages.

Unlike B2C, where often there is a single-minded proposition that needs to be repeated over and over again, in B2B there are different messages according to who you are targeting in the sales and decision-making process.

Key Differences

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4. There is often a myriad of niche/vertical market opportunities.

The chances are that your product can be sold within a wide variety of niche and vertical markets - each of which has different characteristics and media.

5. It's about the organisation, not just the product.

In consumer markets it's the product that's the most important entity. For many products (eg washing powders) the organisation behind the brand is irrelevant.

In B2B the opposite is the case. In most instances the customer is making a significant purchase. So after-sales service, the stability of the company and its investment in R&D can all become important.

Expectations

What should you look for or expect when engaging an external B2B pr agency?

1. Understanding and experience of the B2B space.

They need to come with a track record of working successfully for other B2B companies - and an understanding of all the complexities of B2B marketing.

2. Solid technical capabilities.

It's absolutely vital that the PR agency have staff that understand any 'tech' side of your business, can discuss and debate B2B marketing with you, and write compelling and accurate material. Ideally they will be able to offer staff who have worked on 'the other side' - within some of the media that are important to you.

Expectations

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3. Strong appreciation of positioning and messaging.

The tough competitive environment and often a lack of product differentiation in today's marketplace, places a premium on communication strategy and positioning.

4. A broad and up-to-date appreciation of audiences, channels and media.

A strong focus of B2B must be on trade, business and technical media - and your agency must be thoroughly familiar with those that relate to your business. But they also need to think beyond the media - to understand how channel marketing works and how to leverage this with events, sponsorships, thought leadership campaigns and out-of-the-box ideas.

5. Measurement.

It's vital that you track the success of your PR program. Don't consider an agency unless it can offer a meaningful measurement approach. Remember, it's about a lot more than just media coverage.