

Business Focus: PR

How to Find, Pitch and Brief a PR Support

Finding good quality and reliable PR support can bring huge benefits to both you and your business: so how do you find that perfect partner?

Much like a great recipe – the results you get **OUT** will depend on what you put **IN**. Of course you need high-quality ingredients (your PR supplier), but you also need clear instructions (your PR brief and marketing objectives) to pull off the desired result.

Where to Look...

1. **Peer recommendations:** ask colleagues and connections for their recommendations. Make sure you get a clear picture of the work conducted, the results achieved and what the working relationship was like to determine whether they might be suitable for your needs. Bear in mind, the PR may be conflicted out if currently representing one of your colleagues.



2. **Public Relations Guilds or Professional Bodies:** many of these organisations have individual or agency directories, listing accredited PR suppliers based on industry sectors.



The Chartered Institute of PR, the Public Relations Communications Association and the Healthcare Communications Association are good places to start.



PRs have to pay to be members and must also sign an agreed code of conduct, which provides an additional level of reassurance as to the calibre of those included in these registers. The PRCA also has a 'matching service' which takes into account a number of criteria (e.g., budget, industry sector etc.) to suggest potential suppliers from their members.

3. **Place a PR Job Ad:** PRWeek and the PRCA have a combined job search facility – you could place an ad for your specific requirements.



Aesthetic medicine is a specialist area: it can require both pharmaceutical-level communication capabilities as well as a consumer beauty approach. Most agencies focus on either one or the other, (larger agencies may have different divisions under one roof) – but few have the experience in this specific sector, so you will need to take this into account within your selection and briefing process.

Checklist for Success

Use the below checklist to sort through your candidates and see who's going to give you the best fit:

- ✓ **Do they have relevant experience?** Have they worked in the industry or with similar companies?
- ✓ **Do they have the right relationships?** With key media and your target audiences? Check with your own media contacts if they've worked with this agency/person before.
- ✓ **Who will be your main contact?** Sometimes agencies wheel out the senior team for a pitch, only to make a junior person your day-to-day lead. Make sure you're happy with who's actually doing the work and being your main touch-point.
- ✓ **What's their working style like?** Some take a hands-on approach with lots of updates and emails, others only surface at key points. Make sure you're clear about how you like to work.
- ✓ **Fees and ROI?** How much will they charge? What will this include? And critically, how do they measure success and show their value to your business?
- ✓ **How do they bill?** This could be either a project-by-project basis or on a retainer. Check that you're clear and comfortable on what each will mean for you.

It's all about chemistry...



So now you have identified some PR suppliers, the next step is to set up chemistry meetings.

This will be a close working relationship, so these meetings are primarily about whether you get on well and can have a good working relationship. It's also an opportunity to understand their main selling points, how they work and how they can best support you.

Key things to check, aside from their experience, are if there are any current conflicts of interest - do they represent other aesthetic professionals, clinics or products at the moment?

It's all in the Brief...

Once you have your shortlist, you need to develop a detailed brief for the pitch. Your brief should clearly outline your objectives, expectations and challenges: provide as much background information as you can and set clear questions for the agencies to answer within their pitch.



It is also critical to include clear timelines, the budget available and expected deliverables. Give the suppliers a reasonable amount of time to develop their pitch response – at least two weeks - and set a date for them to come in and present to you.

The more specific and clear the brief, the easier it will be for you to identify which suppliers meet your requirements. Good luck!

Next time: Advertising, Editorial or Advertorial - What do they all mean?



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