



PR: in-house or not?

In today's increasingly cost-conscious times, many organisations are looking for ways to justify bringing (or keeping) their PR activities in-house. There's no question that it's possible to do your own PR – although you may not do it well. The in-house approach appears cheaper and, maybe, easier to monitor. But, there are some major drawbacks:

Time and Effort: All the time and effort spent 'doing PR' for yourself or your organisation, means you're not doing the job you were hired to do. Doing PR may be fun – but you need to remember that (a) you're not a professional and (b) you should be able to be more productive and profitable to your organisation by doing your 'day job'.

Experience and Creativity: Using an outside agency gives you the chance to draw on the thinking and experience of others – who're bound to have a wider experience of life, especially marketing and PR, than you have. If you're careful and choose the right PR professional(s) with which to work, you'll be able to access people who're at the peak of their PR game.

Lateral Thinking: Since a PR agency handles a mix of organisations, operating in different sectors, it'll come across – and know how to use - a broader range of new ideas, approaches, opportunities and media than you will.

Professional Advice: An organisation's senior team is more likely to take a PR professional's advice because it's paying for it. They may also be more likely to share their vision and business plan with an (external) PR agency – not least because they may assume that an in-house part-time PR person already knows the vision and business plan (which may not be the case). Explaining the organisation's vision and business plan to an external professional should not only help to clarify it in the team's mind but also enable it to be communicated to a non-partisan audience more effectively.

Focus: An in-house (part-time) PR person is either forced to 'do PR' in her/his spare time or given so much 'PR work' to do that her/his other work suffers. Either way, this dilutes any PR campaign's focus and pace.

Connections: An external PR agency will use its network connections to introduce the organisation to potential business partners, investors, distributors, customers and so on – none of whom need necessarily be discovered independently by the organisation.