



PR: The what, when, who, where and why

**Get a better understanding of how
PR can be used to maximise your
ROI at an event.**



The changing world of PR

The main reason companies exhibit at events is new business: they want to discover new customers and strengthen relationships with existing ones to increase sales.

But what you may not have considered is how PR can help you achieve this. As part of your marketing campaign, you can use PR to let potential buyers know what events you're exhibiting at and encourage them to visit your stand.

You can also use the event as a PR opportunity in itself. Exhibitions are a hub of media activity and can be a great place for you to meet journalists, announce new products and services, secure coverage, get your marketing messages across and pin your own PR activity on.

Public relations is now very much a board level, strategic, discussion topic and is aligned, more than ever, to business objectives and the bottom line.

PESO

Many PR people now follow the PESO model for structuring their campaigns, which can be a really useful guide to help you plan ahead:

PAID MEDIA

This includes social media advertising, sponsored content and email marketing.

EARNED MEDIA

This refers to what PR is traditionally known for: media coverage for your brand in newspapers, on TV and in the trade press.

SHARED MEDIA

Another term for social media, this is often looked after by PR teams.

OWNED MEDIA

Essentially, media owned by you; content that you have created and 'own'. This could be blogs, white papers, trend reports, for example: any content where you control the messaging and distribution.



A solid PR campaign can include some, or all, of these elements. Which you opt for will depend on what type of business you are, who your target audience is, which channels are best suited to reach them and how much budget you have.

For example, if your company sells fishing products, then an influencer campaign on Instagram (paid) combined with reviews in lifestyle magazines (earned) could work best. If you sell manufacturing services, then trade coverage (earned) plus content (owned) may work better for you.

Creating your exhibitor PR campaign

1. Set objectives

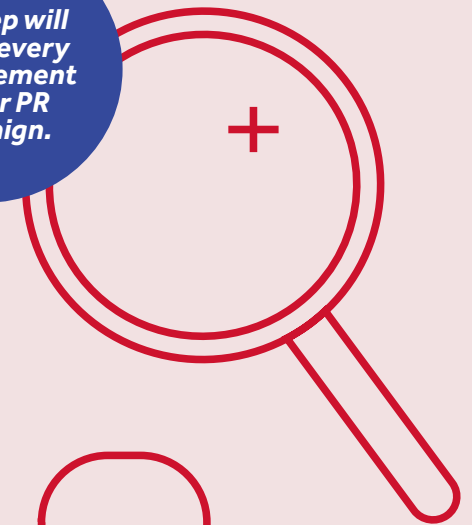
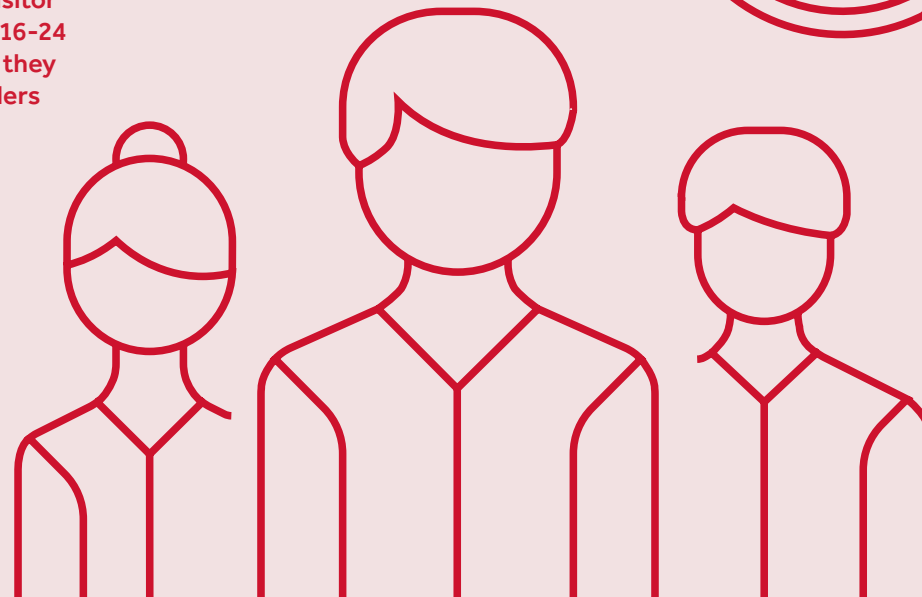
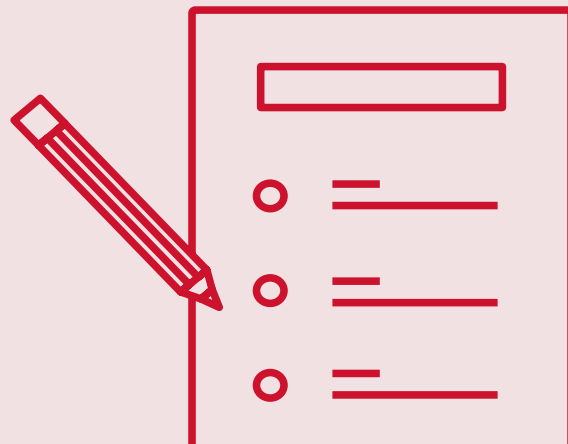
Before you create your event PR plan, always set your objectives. It's a good idea to work hand-in-hand with your sales and marketing teams to ensure the whole company is aligned.

Are you a new brand launching to the industry? Do you have new products or services to shout about? Are you releasing vital trend research that will make your industry sit up and take notice? Are you premiering a state-of-the-art development?

2. Identify who you need to talk to

Identify who your customers are and be as specific as you can. This should be relatively straightforward because they should mirror the event's visitor audience. For example, are they 16-24 year old gadget obsessives? Are they fitness junkies? Are they art dealers with billionaire clients? Are they technology buyers with million dollar budgets?

This step will impact every other element of your PR campaign.



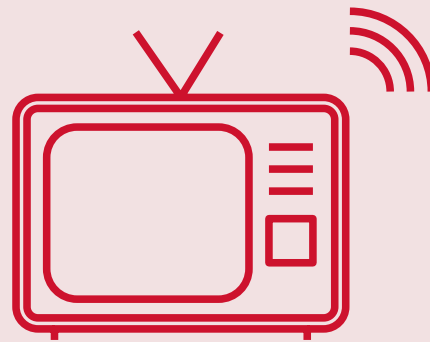
Creating your exhibitor PR campaign

3. Establish how you're going to reach them

Once you've mapped out who to talk to, you can start to plan how you're going to reach them? Will it be through:

PAID MEDIA

If you're trying to hit millennials, for example, then social media advertising or influencer outreach may be your best approach but bear in mind this can be a very expensive option.

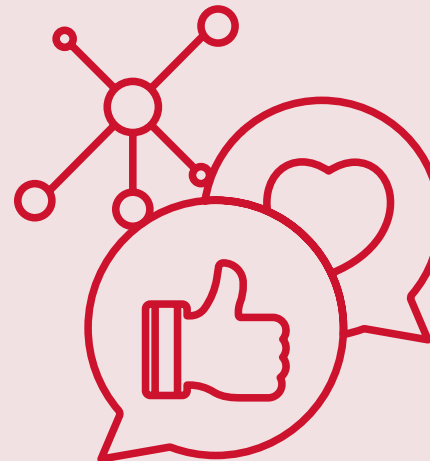


EARNED MEDIA

Do you know what media your customers read? If not, spend time on researching this and create a target media list (you might want to buy a database such as Gorkana, PR Max or Agility). Consider television, radio, newspapers, lifestyle publications, business and trade publications. Find out what media partners the show has and add them to your list. Ask the show's PR team to share a list of publications who normally attend, or who have already registered to attend this year – this is always a great starting point.

SHARED MEDIA

Social media is not just the domain of a younger demographic. Using LinkedIn and Twitter to remind everyone you'll be at an event, what stand you're on and why they should come and visit you can be very effective among older, professional audiences. For younger audiences, you can consider running ticket competitions on Facebook or Instagram, for example.



OWNED MEDIA

It's become increasingly important to add value through your comms and not to continually bombard your audiences with one sided messaging. Creating useful, practical content for them pre-show, that you can share on your website, through social media, in press releases and email marketing can boost a visitor's perception of your brand. You can use this content as an incentive for people to register/buy tickets or to visit you on your stand for more information.



Getting your message across

1. What to say

- **MESSAGING:** What are the key messages you want to get across about your brand, products and/or services at the event? That you're the biggest, best or newest? That you have special event offers, your product is perfect for Christmas or it's the next big thing?
- You have limited time to get your message across – most trade shows are two to three days, consumer events rarely surpass one week – so try and keep the content simple and the volume to a minimum.

MEDIA TRAINING: Decide who's going to speak on behalf of your company and then make sure they are briefed in advance, they know what to say, what to wear (if TV), how to respond to difficult questions and how to behave for each media sector. If you are not comfortable carrying out this training, bring in the professionals. It will be money well spent.

FORMAT: Have a think about what vehicle to use to get your messages across:

- Press releases – this is what you use to convey news

2. How to say it

TONE OF VOICE: If you already have brand guidelines, then your job's done here. If not, consider the industry you're operating in, who your customers are and how you want them to perceive you before establishing your tone of voice.



- Media features, for example, interviews, thought leadership pieces – these are great for putting your company at the heart of an industry by showing you're an expert on a specific topic or sector
- Competitions - use giveaways on social media or in the press to get visitors to notice you
- Social media - have some fun with social media and use video and graphics to increase engagement.

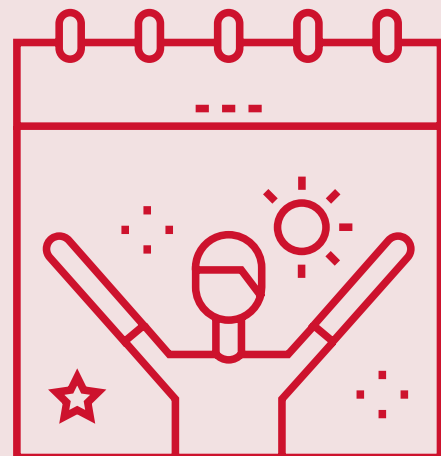
Getting your message across

3. When to say it

PRE-SHOW

- Invite media to visit your stand
- Set up media interviews for your spokesperson to take place at the show
- Tease the media with an embargoed press release
- Consider holding a press event pre-show to announce your news if you want to keep the show 'clean' of media appointments
- Use content such as blog posts to raise awareness of your presence at the event

- Post on social media and tag the event
- Work with the event's PR team and piggyback on every PR opportunity available – make sure you feature in the visitor preview and show guide, that you share your news and make yourself available for media interviews
- Is there a conference element to the event? Put forward someone from your company to speak.



AT THE SHOW

- Get your press information into the press office
- Consider holding a press conference at the event to launch your product/ announce your news – make sure you invite the show's photographer/ video crew
- Hold events on your stand for visitors, for example, a cocktail hour, mini workshops or conference sessions, competitions and giveaways
- Use content like white papers, trend reports and industry research as incentives for visitors to come to your stand and allow you to capture their data
- Hold a photo call
- Use social media throughout the event to engage with visitors.
- Make sure your news is included in any Show Dailies – get the deadlines from the show's PR team? Appoint someone from your company to speak.

Conclusion:

- Plan, plan and plan again
- Work closely with sales and marketing to set your objectives, messaging and tone of voice
- Be clear about what you want to say, to whom, how and when
- Piggyback on the event's PR machine to maximise impact and ROI
- Monitor coverage and keep the conversation going post-event



Careful planning leads to strong results

So spend some time doing this upfront. Use our handy Exhibitor Training Modules, they'll show you just that. Find them all at www.etf.com.au

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