

Harness the partnership approach for greater return on PR investment

By [Michelle Cavé](#), issued by [Brandfundi](#)

27 Feb 2018

Founder and owner of Brandfundi, Michelle Cavé tackles the client/public relations pain-points to help clients get the most from their investment

Recently there have been more and more stories about how Public Relations (PR) is one of the most stressful occupations globally. From an outsider's perspective, it sounds questionable, however there has been a seismic shift in awareness of PR, news consumption and generation, access to information and the 24/7 newsfeed updates. Working successfully in PR today means it has to be almost all-consuming.

Whilst PR Officers (PROs) might not be saving lives, they're working to save and breathe life into brands, managing the respective reputations amongst all those who come into contact with it. A positive brand reputation is the foundation for strong brand equity, which correlates directly with tangible and valuable business growth. Done well over the long term, a strong brand reputation can lead to increased margins, and greater customer loyalty, etc. It's key to financial success.

PROs and Consultants in particular, have to manage heaps of information, meet endless deadlines and chase challenging targets. While stress is the norm in this job, it can be further compounded when working with clients who don't nurture the partnership. The best results are often achieved when the partnership is built on trust, accessibility, and strategic alignment.

Michelle Cavé, who founded and runs Brandfundi, a boutique PR and communications agency has built her career in this industry over the past two decades. Based on recurring client pain-points, she shares how best to get the most out of your PR relationship and investment;

Keep Your PR Consultant Close

PR Consultants can only truly understand your company if you share the ins and outs of it with them. You should feel comfortable enough to entrust them with business challenges, weaknesses and/or historical issues, so that they can strategically address them, or develop tactics to manage or shift the resultant negative stakeholder perception/s. Similarly, all successes, opportunities and goals should be shared. Invite them to join your Exco, management meetings and/or staff updates, and keep them informed on anything that impacts the business or brand.

You Know Your Business Best

Working on your brand means that a PR Consultant will learn about your business and market, but this can take time. You will always know more about your business and sector than the consultant, and it would serve you well to share ongoing insights and nuances with them. Take the time to induct them on your business and market, and to provide detailed briefs.

Contract Agreement Duration

Hiring a consultant to add real value to a brand over a short term period, i.e. anything less than 12 months may not guarantee long-lasting results. Heard of the saying, "if you hear anything often enough, you'll start to believe it"? This is true of brand messaging. In order to gain real traction and heightened brand awareness, your message needs to be consistently and frequently communicated. Budget often determines the duration of the PR activity however the investment will pay off over a longer time frame.

Make The Time

All too often PR meetings are cancelled or rescheduled due to other business commitments or deadlines. Those individuals assigned to manage the PR relationship are usually senior decision makers with frantic schedules. Nonetheless, clients who take the time to brief properly, provide supporting information and revert with feedback on request for specific content or materials, will help to keep up the momentum of the PR activity, and meet objectives more timeously.

Meet Deadlines

Non responsive clients who ignore emails, phone calls and text messages about an editorial interview opportunity, or approval of material that is on deadline, for example, is not only tarnishing the reputation of the business as a reliable source, but also the PRO's ability to deliver. It also puts them on the spot to answer to the journalist, whilst keeping the relationship in tact so as to be considered for future editorial opportunities. Respect the deadline.

It's What We Do Best

PRO's know what the media are looking for and they know how to package the information to suit the journalist requirements. They also know how best to handle negative sentiment towards your business or brand or when best to host an event. Lean on them, and trust them to deliver based on their experience and skillset.

Have Realistic Expectations

This is especially important when measuring editorial performance. There are so many factors that can work against editorial being featured, including breaking global or national news, understaffed newsrooms, time-sensitivity and limited advertising support, etc. While all efforts are made to get as much free exposure as possible, it really cannot be controlled or guaranteed. Measuring PR value requires realistic expectations, and AVEs (Advertising Value Equivalents) are not the answer. This is an outdated form of measuring PR value, and globally this tool has been done away with as there is no industry benchmark. Rather consider outcomes, the effect on company performance, tune into your social media community conversations, and don't be afraid to spend money on measuring before and after for accurate analysis, particularly when measuring stakeholder perceptions.

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