

The logo for mtm, consisting of the lowercase letters 'mtm' in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid green square.

# PR strategy guide

Securing board level buy-in for your PR plan



# Foreword

## **Chloe Buchanan, PR Lead**

As companies continue to adapt to the challenge of doing business amid ever-changing circumstances, making sure that you remain relevant and real to your audience is vital. Confident and clear communication with customers has never been more important. This is where the right PR strategy can make or break your ability to remain authentic and trusted during unprecedented times.

However, despite the key role played by PR, we know that getting buy-in from board level is not easy. With scrutiny on budgets at an all-time high, every penny spent is under examination.

A recent survey by PR Moment showed that CEOs are more worried about financial performance (58%) than any other metric, including company reputation (13%) and managing talent (13%).

But surely company reputation and financial performance are intrinsically linked? That is certainly the million-dollar question. If you are a marketer with a PR budget, and you need to justify spend to the board, how do you show the vital role that PR plays?

At MTM, we work with a wide variety of businesses across different sectors, but no matter the size or sector, the success of PR is often measured by its impact on sales. There are a number of ways to get buy-in from those paying the bill, and show the key role that PR can play in building and maintaining brand loyalty and delivering ROI.

This guide will cover some key steps and questions to consider before approaching stakeholders and those who sign-off the budget.

# 01 How to prepare

There are a number of ways to get buy-in from the board and demonstrate the key role that PR can play in your marketing communication activity. Here we have detailed six tips to help you prepare for sign-off success.

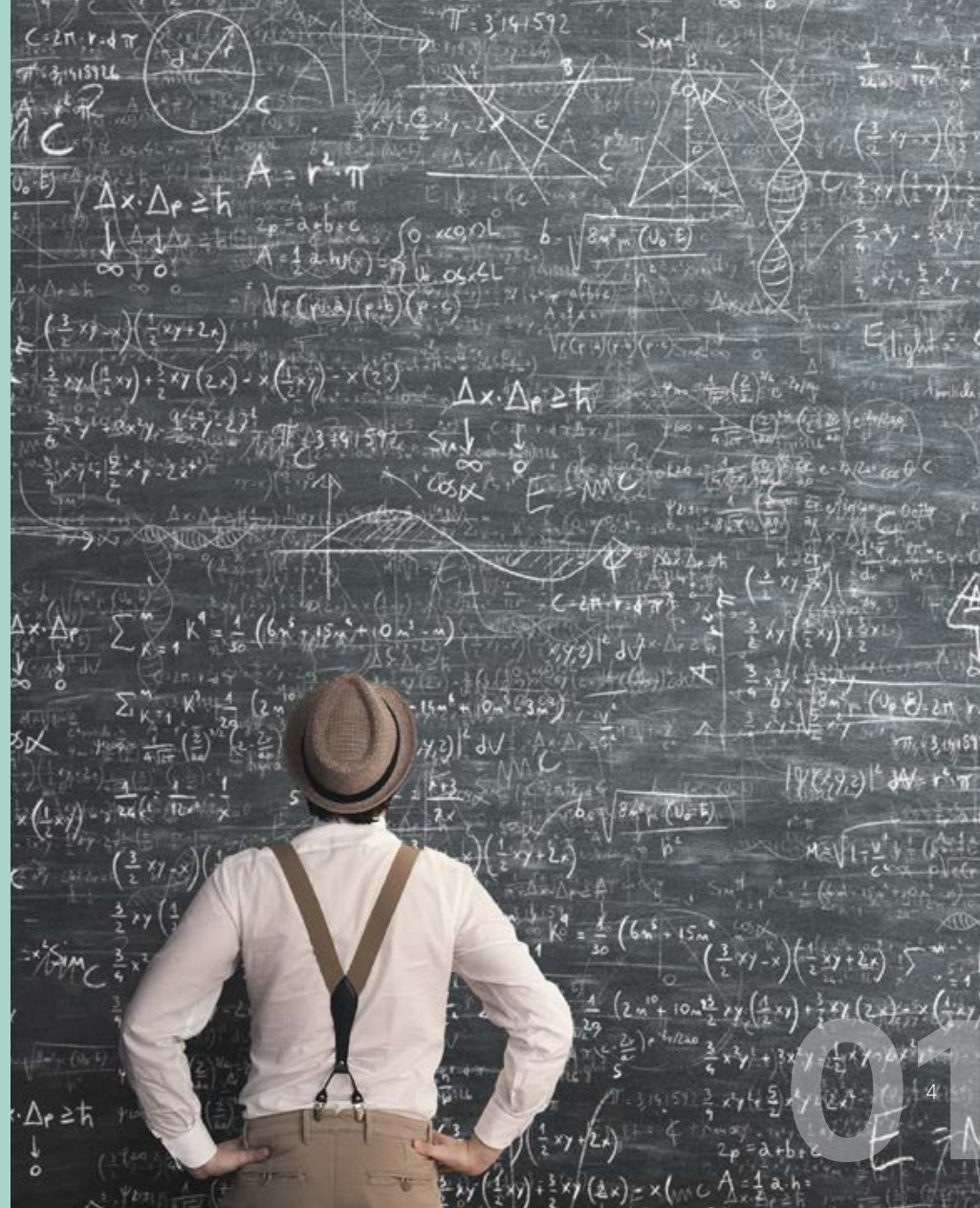


HOW TO PREPARE

# Knowledge is as important as numbers

A PR update in a board meeting will often consist of a coverage book and some key metrics, such as volume, reach and share of voice. While these things are all important, **adding insight** to explain how this relates back to the business, what value media coverage brings and how it can reach your target customer will all help you fight your corner.

Insights gained through PR – like data about your competitors, industry and how customers and media perceive you – can be used across the entire business, not only in communications.





HOW TO PREPARE

# Create a plan and link it to wider business objectives

According to a **report in PR Moment** in early 2020, more than half (53 percent) of B2B businesses do not have a communications plan in place, even though those with a plan accelerate their business goals faster. However, blindly setting out on a mission to ‘do some PR’ will leave the business questioning your aims and you battling each month to protect your budget. Writing a communications plan and aligning it with the business doesn’t have to be long or complex – a few well-defined areas of focus can make all the difference.





HOW TO PREPARE

# Be agile

Planning is essential but **agility is crucial**. There is no point getting buy-in, following a plan and then presenting back at the end of a quarter only to find that wider business goals have changed. Regular meetings with the board will ensure that any planned activity remains relevant and in line with how the business is evolving. That way you can tailor plans accordingly and show the value of PR first-hand, to support changing company initiatives and aspirations.



# 4

# Tip

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## Get involved

An effective way of getting the board onside with your PR plan is to involve them in its development. Whether you are looking to build a compelling brand story, make your message more memorable, or talk about your business plans or turnaround. **Storytelling** is a good way to engage audiences, both inside and outside of your organisation. Hold a messaging workshop to gather the views of the board and then build your strategy around it. This process will make everyone feel more accountable and ultimately more invested in making it work.

# 01

HOW TO PREPARE

# Build a narrative

Every business has a story to tell – it's just a case of communicating it in the most compelling and engaging way. Putting storytelling at the heart of your PR strategy will help bring campaigns to life and position your company, and what you stand for, in a way which resonates and is relatable to your audience. A communications campaign built on this approach will be far more successful than relying on product updates and win announcements to solely fuel your content.





HOW TO PREPARE

# PR might not always be the answer

Taking a step back and looking at where marketing budgets are best spent is especially relevant to companies looking to take their first foray into PR. For those companies, the spend on PR could constitute a large part of their marketing budget to make it a reality. You might think PR is what you need, but another discipline such as content marketing, social media or SEO may be more suitable.



# 12 C-suite questions

Before approaching the board, there are a number of key questions you will need to be able to answer to get budgets signed off and ideas across the line. Our PR Lead, Chloe Buchanan, answers some of the most common questions we regularly get from the C-suite about budgets, PR and – importantly – ROI to give you the top tips for response.



ANSWERING C-SUITE QUESTIONS

# Why should I spend on PR over other marketing channels?

PR is a crucial part of the marketing mix. It's the only discipline to generate third-party endorsement for a business and its products, and when carried out successfully, it will generate valuable coverage from trusted media experts.

It does, however, work best when integrated within the marketing mix. To feed the media, your PR

team will create an abundance of business stories and content, including bylines, case studies, white papers, reports, infographics, videos, etc, all of which can fuel your marketing campaigns and be used across your entire organisation. It's also worth noting that PR can help your marketing activity land more effectively by educating customers and building trust around your brand.

# PR can be long-term, what if I need quick results?

While brand awareness and reputation is a part of PR that can take some time to build, any programme should be multi-faceted.

At MTM, all of our PR programmes start off with a plan that aligns to your business goals. This will enable us to get you in front of key customers fast, while helping you reach a broader audience over time. We'll make sure you have quick wins to report back to your board, building momentum as we go.



ANSWERING C-SUITE QUESTIONS

## Does our target market actually read the media?

The way we consume news and information is constantly evolving. It is up to your PR team to tell your story to your audience through the right channels and at the right time. This could be niche trade titles or national media, online news hubs and specialist media websites. What works for one company might not be right for another. Agreeing a tiered media list from the outset will ensure any campaign focusses on generating coverage in the places where your customers and prospects get their daily news fix or industry insights. Customers are not influenced in silo, which is why a multi-vertical approach can often be the most impactful.

ANSWERING C-SUITE QUESTIONS

# What can ROI bring to my business?

The best way to show ROI is to build a PR strategy around your business goals. If you can show that PR is having a direct impact on the business, then that's the ROI battle won. When we work with clients, our first question is always "What are you trying to achieve?"

If the answer is brand awareness, or (re)building your company's reputation, then a hardworking press office is a great solution. But if you are measured by driving or converting leads, that is less likely to be the case. Taking time to ask the right questions is likely to make your boardroom conversations much easier to navigate.



ANSWERING C-SUITE QUESTIONS

## How can I measure PR success?

Although there is no magic metric to gauge success, this question is becoming easier to answer as the PR landscape evolves and digital PR comes to the fore. PR is typically measured through audience reach and share of voice metrics. However, it can also deliver valuable insights such as competitor and industry data, as well as tell you how the media and your customers perceive you. All of which is vital information for the C-suite and can be used across the entire business, helping to demonstrate the value of PR and ROI.



# Contact us

**If you would like further insight,  
give Chloe a call.**

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