



PR vs. Marketing: How to know which is right for you and your business

By Pat Hammond, The Business Guild

Tired of marketing campaigns with more fizzle than sizzle? Maybe it's time to consider a public relations strategy.

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about public relations (PR)?

Politicians? Celebrities? Damage control?

TV shows like Scandal, Flack, and Ray Donovan tell us that PR professionals focus on fixing bad press and covering up bad behavior, but we all know what you see on TV isn't real. (Even reality TV, but that's another conversation.) The truth is, public relations is an essential component of brand management.

Yes, I said essential. I know it will surprise many people, but small business

owners can find substantial benefits from hiring a PR consultant.

- Brand Messaging
- Public Visibility
- Brand Management
- Media Relations
- Reputation Management

And yes, it sounds an awful lot like marketing, but it's not.

How is public relations different from marketing?

At its core, public relations is all about creating visibility and managing how people perceive your brand.

Public relations communications specialist Elaina

Bedio, principal consultant at [Purpose Public Affairs](#), explains that a PR consultant focuses on elevating the public perception of an organization, or a business, or a person.

"They focus on consistent strategic messaging, and putting your best foot forward. It's more to do with communication in a broader sense than marketing."

On the flip side, marketing is all about generating interest in specific products and services.

Charlotte Silverstein, founder of [Lena Rose PR](#), says, "Marketing is more directly related to sales, numbers, newsletters, promotions, and funnels," and public relations is

Public relations is essential to building consumer trust and awareness

It's the difference between big picture and sales...

about “establishing trust and credibility with your core audience, raising awareness, and opening doors to new customers and opportunities.”

This distinction is important because developing your brand is the cornerstone of building an overall marketing strategy.

What does a public relations specialist do?

While marketing is a blanket term that covers all business promotion, public relations is a subset of marketing that targets your brand.

- Press Releases & Corporate Communications
- Media Relations & Training
- Manage Brand Channels
- Thought Leadership
- Event Marketing
- Community Relations

PR professionals do everything from helping you craft your brand message to developing media connections and getting

you in front of your target audience. — All the things you wish you had the time and expertise to do.

How do you choose between PR and marketing?



It's really a matter of identifying your goal. Do you want to promote your brand or make sales?

In a perfect world, your marketing and public relations strategies would go hand-in-hand.

Silverstein says the ideal scenario is that a business has the

budget for both PR and marketing, however, if that is not the case, PR should be your priority.

Bedio says while both are important, start by speaking with a PR person before or shortly after starting a business.

Your brand is the public face and the heart at the core of your business. It can be the key driver for everything, from products and market development to employee

recruitment and community relations. With so much at stake, it's important to work with a professional to clarify and develop your brand's identity.

Another important consideration is visibility.

How much time and money do small business owners spend on marketing campaigns that fizzle because nobody knows who they are?

It's not an issue for companies that can afford massive blitz campaigns, but that doesn't describe most solopreneurs or

microbusiness owners.

As Silverstein says, “If your audience is not aware of your business or brand in the first place, then they cannot make the commitment or investment you might be looking for.”

Wrap Up

Self-promotion is hard.

Hiring a PR consultant can be a game changer for people who have a hard time tooting their own horn.

- Improve your reputation
- Connect with your target audience
- Build credibility

In addition to helping to clarify your brand and your messaging, a PR firm can help you find opportunities to establish your expertise and connect with your customers.

If these are things you struggle with, think about hiring a PR firm.

Many PR consultants offer project and hourly rates, which makes it an affordable choice for business owners to build authority and brand awareness.

Even if you're on a tight budget, it will be well worth the expense. ✓

