



# What is PR?

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## Media Relations

*Bamboo PR is a technology specialist PR & Marketing agency. We tailor our services to match your exact requirements thus becoming a flexible extension of your business. | [www.bamboopr.co.uk](http://www.bamboopr.co.uk)*



**W**elcome to the first of many explanatory white papers from **Bamboo PR**. A common question we are asked is 'what is PR?'

To help clarify things, we are producing a collection of white papers which help answer the question. Aside from making our lives easier, it should hopefully make your PR planning more targeted.

So where to start?



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## Public Relations in 2012 – Just What Does it Mean?

**W**ith the invention of personal computing, the world has changed beyond recognition - but you already know that, don't you? You're probably reading this document via an Apple iPad or Android Smartphone. It's likely you're not even in the office, instead sunning yourself by the pool or if you're in London, pressed up against a stranger in an overcrowded train.

Logically this means your customers aren't glued to their PCs or desks either. Being plugged into the brave new world they expect you, the companies they buy from, to be too.

So - well done if you've already climbed aboard the digital bandwagon, that can be the most difficult part of the journey. However, we understand the digital era has thrown up a host of challenges when it comes to general business, let alone an effective communications strategy.

Don't worry though – we know that's why you're here reading this. You want to find out more about branding, PR and Marketing and what it means in 2012. Here goes...

## Welcome to the Internet

**B**ut first, congratulations are in order – you’ve found a technology specialist PR and Marketing agency that understands your needs and concerns. Hopefully this paper will help explain just what PR is and how it can be used to spread your company’s message.



You see, public relations used to be about handwriting press releases and mailing boxed product. It was a simpler time when journalists were open to every story and consumers were happy with conventional messaging.

Nowadays it’s different. While media relations still makes up a core component of PR, the term **public relations** has taken on a whole new meaning. An efficient PR team will adapt its practice in line with its clients’ needs – that’s a strong PR strategy.

Yes - press releases, case studies, white papers, bylined articles and forward features are still crucial for generating coverage and buzz, but now you can add social media, conferences and events, webinars, email marketing, mobile channels, blogging and a host of other tools to the mix.

Hold up – there’s a confused look on your face? Forward features, bylined articles; what are these terms and how do they relate to your bottom line?

This is half the problem - people have difficulty understanding what public relations actually is, so we’ve decided to start from the beginning.

## Journalistic Interest

**J**ournalists are your mouthpiece. While a company’s website can present news, sharing it with the relevant writers in your industry to generate a story idea is more complex. The press release can be considered the PR professional’s bread and butter.

***Press Release (n) – a standard document outlining a news item about the company, often accompanied by executive quotes and stock information.***

Well that was easy. Write one, send it to your contacts and watch the page views roll in, right?

Sadly it’s never that simple. Press releases should be dispatched to a targeted press list by PR professionals that already have strong relationships with those on it. You wouldn’t send a technology journalist a story about bread, would you? Well, if it was electronic self cooking bread you might, but that rarely happens.

Press releases don’t stop there - they need phone

*A good press release will have  
SEO, backlinks and social media  
optimisation in mind...*

and email follow up – journalists are busy and sending out a release isn't enough to stand out in busy inboxes. Follow up is a critical part of PR – it's often the lifeblood of an agency.

## Featured at the Top

**W**ith the press release dispatched, we can move onto the other whimsical terms PR departments fling about.

Features can take many forms, but generally a writer will have a topic and to give it credibility, they'll bring in outside opinion to strengthen the argument.

This is where PR departments feature. Whether ad-hoc or planned months in advance, they trawl through a huge amount of feature lists to hone in on the most relevant for clients.

Features come in two sizes:

1. **Forward Features** – publications (generally print over online) enjoy planning. How else would a magazine come together months in advance of its publication date?

To ease the process, editors produce forward feature calendars which outline the year's feature topics.

2. **Ad-Hoc** – much like the above, ad-hoc feature requests come from journalists that need assistance from industry experts, i.e. you. Impromptu features are never planned and often have limited deadlines.

First a suitable feature is brought to the attention of the client. If the journalist is interested, written comment is organised. Assigned to a company executive, the PR department helps with the appropriate tone and message. If considered interesting, the submitted comment is published in the feature alongside other spokespeople.

Alternatively, a journalist might appreciate a one-on-one phone call and the PR team might coordinate a phone interview accordingly.

## The End Result?

- Thought Leadership
- Brand Exposure
- Active industry presence

### *Five Uses for an Industry Feature*

- Coverage displayed on company website
- Content for social media sharing
- Quotes for company marketing collateral
- Repurposed for future media opps
- Email newsletter sections

## Leading Thoughts

**T**hought Leadership – that’s another term thrown around a lot. Features do a good job positioning companies as the experts they rightfully are, but what’s better than 300 words of comment? **3,000 words.**

This is where bylined articles come in. Why share column space with other companies when you can present a single article on the topic of your choice.

***Bylined Article – an objective, unbiased article, generally accompanied by a corporate headshot and bio of the author, which offers readers practical advice on business issues.***

So how does a company get a bylined article published? First, you need an idea – one a publication’s readership will enjoy. As PR agencies monitor the press they know what’s topical and what’s not. The final article has to avoid company bias, offer readers sound advice and most of all, be entertaining - regurgitated marketing copy is unwelcome.

Editors are inundated with requests so ideas have to stand out from the offset and proposals regularly require follow up. This process takes time – it isn’t the case of sending off an article synopsis and someone coming back straight away. Close relationships between journalists and PR professionals improve the chance of an article being placed and that’s only possible when people have dedicated their careers to servicing the press.

## The Thin White Line

**I**f a bylined article still doesn’t sound satisfactory, there’s one final option to look at. In fact, you’re looking at an example of one now. **White papers** are objective, professionally produced thought leadership pieces. They’re branded according to a company’s specifics and they’re often supported by relevant statistics, quotes and links to enforce the presented message.

Their use goes much further than standard online exposure and journalist publishing. White papers validate a company’s expertise, can be used in marketing activities and help improve the relationship between partners and prospects by presenting valued content. They can be used as a lead generating resource, in standard PR journalist publishing and as a shareable material for social media, email marketing and press packs.

**Sounds easy, doesn’t it?** With a supportive client, an efficient PR department and a lot of hard work, it actually is. The opportunities available to companies are many, and while the above examples create the foundations of any PR campaign, creativity and an understanding of the sector ensures the possibilities for media led PR are endless.

The next step? Have some news to tell and **[find a PR agency](#)** to share it with the world.

