

What Are PR Communication Tools & Techniques?

Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their public, according to the Public Relations Society of America. Small businesses can use public relations tools and techniques to communicate effectively with customers, suppliers, employees, investors and the community. Public relations techniques help businesses market their products and services and they influence attitudes toward the company.

Public relations tools include sending out press releases, partnering with the media, using social media effectively, communicating with your employees, and corporate social responsibility.

Communicating New Developments with Press Releases

Newspapers, magazines, radio and television are important channels for communicating with customers, investors and the community. If you launch a new product, for example, you can raise awareness and stimulate interest by issuing a press release to newspapers and magazines that reach your target market. When you want to attract investors, send a press release to the business or financial editors of newspapers describing growth opportunities in your market or significant new business wins. If you want to gain public approval for your new factory plans, explain the economic and employment benefits to the community through press releases to local media.

Partnering with the Media

Providing the media with opinions or comments on important issues can help raise your company's profile. Invite editors and journalists to interview your chief executive on legislation that affects your industry, for example. Ask your technical director to comment or write an article on an important new technology or material, and offer the content to trade magazines. Speaking engagements at conferences or local business events, such as chambers of commerce meetings, also provide valuable opportunities to demonstrate your company's expertise.

Make Effective Use of Social Media

Participating in social media gives you the opportunity to monitor attitudes toward your company and fine-tune your public relations strategy in response. Monitor references to your company or products on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or product review sites, and respond to both positive and negative comments. By engaging in dialogue, you can help to build positive attitudes and manage your company's reputation.

Emphasize Employee Communications

Employee communications are important, even in small businesses. Keeping employees informed about new products, customer wins, important appointments or new business opportunities builds positive attitudes and commitment. You can use newsletters or an employee page on your website to publish relevant company news. Sending press releases on business developments to local newspapers can also help you attract new employees if you are expanding your business.

Focus on Social Responsibility

Volunteering for community projects or providing sponsorship for local sports or community events strengthens relationships with the public and demonstrates your company's social responsibility. If your products or manufacturing processes have an environmental impact, publish your company's policies through press releases or public meetings to establish your green credentials.