



10 TIPS FOR CHOOSING A PR FIRM

1. **Choose a firm that specializes in your sector.** For example, if you are a B2B business, then you should find a PR firm that specializes in B2B.
2. **Keep in mind that while a PR firm may not have experience directly in your space, relevant experience comes in many forms.** A good firm—and experienced executives—can quickly learn and promote new technologies, products, companies or individuals. PR people are professional relationship builders. Instead, ask for examples of how they helped promote a client in a market that they had never before worked in—and what the results were.
3. **Are the executives meeting with you the ones who will be on the team?** If not, why not? If the CEO (or VP overseeing the practice) is present—and he/she should be so you can get a feel for the culture and leadership— what, if any, role will he/she play?
4. **Don't limit yourself to firms in your area.** Today most PR work is done via phone and Internet, which is far more efficient and time-saving.
5. **Find a firm that has a solutions orientation.** You will want suggestions to help you solve your business issues and achieve goals.
6. **Find a firm that believes in your message.** The best type of PR firm is one that not only understands your message, but has enthusiasm for your topic. This will ensure pitches and press releases will be more creative and communications to the media will be attention-grabbing and clear.
7. **How do they measure—and demonstrate—results?** Any PR firm worth their retainer is going to tell you what you can expect ahead of time, and then clearly measure against those metrics on a regular basis.
8. **Expect full disclosure of all billing/accounting.** You should know how much time your firm is spending on your business and how much it is billing you to avoid surprises.
9. **Speak to the PR firm's clients.** When you are choosing a PR firm, it is very important to ask to speak to some of their clients, past and present. Ask questions such as: "How well did the PR firm's staff interact with them? Were they responsive? Were they creative in their approach to your business? What sort of media exposure did you receive?"
10. **Finally, trust your gut.** If the chemistry is off, be wary. You have to *like* the people you are working with this closely.