

Perceptions

Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations

Issue No 1

Welcome...

to *Perceptions*, the solutions newsletter for PR and marketing professionals from Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations.

In this issue Philip Dewhurst, President of the Institute of Public Relations, offers some advice on choosing a PR consultancy. We also take a look at how organisations can profit by investing in PR, the importance of photography and illustrate how some of Bradley O'Mahoney PR's clients have used communications techniques to boost their businesses.



Vickers assignment

We're winning the battle for new business

A host of new account wins have cemented a period of major growth for Bradley O'Mahoney PR and confirmed its position as the region's premier business-to-business communications consultancy.

Bradley O'Mahoney was recently brought in by Vickers Defence Systems to assist with communications surrounding sensitive redundancy announcements on Tyneside and West Yorkshire, and in particular the closure of the Leeds tank factory. This involved close liaison and co-ordination with senior Vickers management including CEO Colin Clark to ensure synergy of message for regional and national media.

"Vickers demonstrated the importance of crisis planning and the benefit of using an experienced external PR consultancy as a resource to deal effectively with a potentially hostile press," said senior consultant Andy

Bruce, who added: "New business has been achieved by understanding the commercial objectives of our clients, and the marketplaces in which they operate, and developing targeted communications strategies that add value in tough trading conditions."

Other new business includes strategic PR work for several companies within the Express Group including Omega Plastics, XPD and Learning Dynamix and designing and

implementing a sales generation trade press campaign for marketing solutions specialist NB Group.

German industrial conglomerate LTG GmbH also used Bradley O'Mahoney PR to communicate to the region's business press and opinion formers ahead of its subsequent successful bid to purchase can-making machinery manufacturer Crabtree Group plc.

Our Mission

To become an indispensable partner to our customers by supplying innovative solutions to their communications needs, adding value to their business and helping them to achieve their goals.

A professional practice

With roots going back to 1991, Newcastle-based Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations is the region's leading strategic public relations firm, specialising in business-to-business, corporate marketing communications support for regional, national and international organisations.

The firm employs a number of senior consultants – with backgrounds in journalism, PR and marketing – who have considerable experience of designing communications programmes and projects for a diverse range of clients spanning the corporate, consumer, service, manufacturing and industrial sectors.

These include Ernst & Young, Express Group, KLM uk, Century Inns, Imass, Ferrograph, Northern Business Forum, Capital Radio, LTG GmbH, Newcastle City Council, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and surveying practice Sanderson Townend & Gilbert.

From strategic thinking to tactical implementation, Bradley O'Mahoney offers a comprehensive range of communications services which includes media relations, sponsorship planning, corporate identity, seminars, multi media, advertising, newsletters and publications, online services, print and production.

Making the right appointment

By Philip Dewhurst FIPR

President of the Institute of Public Relations

Choosing a PR consultancy is not always an exact science. Like other creatively-based marketing services, there is no definitive criteria by which to judge your potential PR consultancy. In many cases it will more than likely come down to who you feel best understands your objectives and who you can best work with to achieve these.

However, there are a number of important attributes that you should also consider as pre-requisites in the decision making process.

Look at your potential PR consultancy's experience; if it doesn't possess an industry track record, can it demonstrate experience in relevant sectors – consumer, corporate, business-to-business work? Does it represent clients with similar issues, or who pay the same sort of budget you're proposing?

Ask also to see a copy of its company credentials. This should outline philosophy, style and creative intellect. Is there a natural chemistry between you and the people who will handle your account? After all, PR is a people-oriented business and you should look upon the consultancy as a strategic partner, which can work with you to achieve business goals.

However, it's the PR consultancy capable of adding value to your bottom line that will really begin to determine your final choice. Can the account team think beyond the brief? Will they



IPR President Philip Dewhurst

be prepared to ask probing questions that go to the heart of the way you've traditionally done things? In short, will the PR consultancy challenge you and the norm?

A good PR consultancy works in partnership with clients to develop a strategic understanding of a business, its products and marketplaces. The approach is also fundamental in helping the consultancy to shape and sharpen company messages and identify the appropriate tactics to ensure maximum impact and value for money.

Added value from PR activity will flow from a consultancy's ability to provide solutions to specific marketing problems or areas where, for instance, a product profile or service offering may be low or lack market penetration. Having identified these problem areas it's the consultancy's role to design and implement tactical activity aimed at communicating defined messages to target audiences.

For further advice on selecting a PR consultancy contact the IPR on 0171 253 5151 or North East Group chairman Tony Bradley on 0191 281 8833.

Dynamic learning for Bradley O'Mahoney

Staff training and personal development have always been high on the agenda at Bradley O'Mahoney PR but the firm has now taken a further step to secure future success and boost client service.

The firm is undertaking a series of workshops and team building sessions with Team Valley-based training company Learning Dynamix under the theme 'Excellence Through Learning' to plan the next phase of its development following five years of consistent growth.

This is an innovative step – Bradley O'Mahoney PR is the first regional consultancy to utilise Learning Dynamix's expertise in people development.

"People are our strongest asset," said partner Tony Bradley. "It's important to develop a strong team-working ethos to ensure everyone is clear about the firm's objectives and works together to achieve them.

"Taking advantage of specialised organisations like Learning Dynamix helps to develop the right culture to take the business forward and, at the same time, to raise standards of client service."



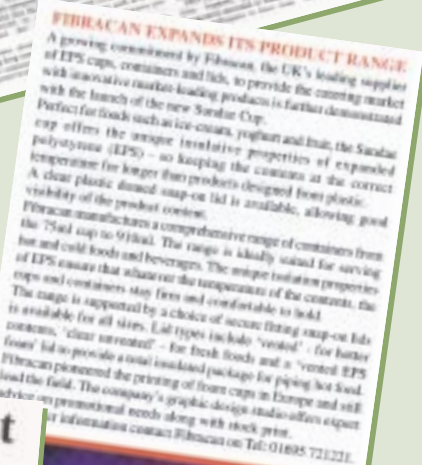
Bradley O'Mahoney at Learning Dynamix

Snap decisions ... the power of pictures

Harold Evans, erstwhile editor of The Times and Sunday Times, once wrote a book espousing the value of good quality photography in contemporary journalism. His views still hold true and today it's perhaps more important than ever that PR material is, wherever possible, supported by good quality professional photography.

With publications tight on space, a thought-provoking picture can often mean the difference between an editor publishing a story or spiking it. Furthermore, weaker stories can also have their chances of being published significantly enhanced if an unusual picture is supplied.

To give you an idea of what editors and picture desks look for in a photograph we've included a selection of recent pictures...



PR is essential – you can bank on it

As a PLC operating in a high profile industry, there is no doubt that for Century Inns public relations has been an essential business tool.



Alistair Arkley

It really has very little to do with 'spin doctoring' and much more about information, education and getting your company's message across.

In the main, our PR is a regular flow of positive messages which are punctuated by major announcements of success, although there are times when you need to put the best spin on a difficult message.

Like deposits in a bank account, these messages build up a stock of positive good news about your company.

This helps in all sorts of ways, for instance by attracting high calibre recruits, but it is critical to counter any bad publicity.

By maintaining a high balance in your positive PR account you have something to call upon when you need to make a withdrawal. Good PR needs to be continuous because bad news costs ten times as much.

At Century Inns we have certainly worked hard at developing our public image since the day we launched in November, 1991.

This has involved everything from strict guidelines on the use of our corporate logo, to establishing strong links with the media and communicating with tenants on a regular basis through a company newsletter.

Good communication has been vital on a number of fronts so that all our 'publics' understand what we are doing and why.

They include our shareholders, over 1,500 employees, 400 tenant publicans, customers and suppliers. And, of course, the general public, some of whom might be considering joining one or more of those publics at any time.

The result is that the reality about our company is relatively well known.

The danger is that if you do not make this effort then the general perception about any organisation is formed by rumour, half truth and fiction.

Even worse, no one may have heard of it. Then, as an unknown quantity, you should try persuading new investors to take an interest in you, customers to buy from you or suppliers to give you 90 days credit and see how far you get.

If that's the case, it's time to open that PR bank account and start saving for the future.

Alistair Arkley

**Chief Executive of Century Inns PLC
the Billingham-based pub company with
500 pubs in the UK.**

Profit from PR in the business jungle

In the jungle that is everyday business life, it is vital that an organisation properly manages its reputation. Get it wrong and the ramifications can be devastating. Get it right and the benefits can be both far reaching and highly beneficial to the bottom line. Here we highlight how companies can profit from PR.

- ❖ PR can generate sales through editorial exposure of products and services in magazines and journals read by your customers.
- ❖ Carefully placed features and articles about your company raise your awareness in important market places and position you as a leading supplier and industry expert.
- ❖ PR can stimulate new interest in mature products via customer case histories. These articles, written up and published in influential media, highlight the problem-solving advantages of your products and services, driving in sales enquiries.
- ❖ PR adds impact to product launches, events and exhibitions etc. It's often a far more cost effective solution than advertising in reaching target audiences with important messages.

- ❖ PR helps in the management of change; helping to pilot through and communicate external and internal initiatives such as name changes, corporate rebranding strategies, training schemes, the pursuit of industry standards and new investment plans.
- ❖ Building and maintaining links with local communities is an important role of PR. This can be achieved, for instance, by highlighting issues about employment and recruitment, environmental policies, trade relations, leisure and healthcare provisions.
- ❖ PR builds direct relationships with important audiences who impact on your organisation's affairs – staff, suppliers, distributors, shareholders and institutional investors. These people can be kept abreast of the matters at hand and the key issues through informative newsletters, seminars, conferences and briefings.
- ❖ And finally, forethought and planning can help you cope when disaster strikes. A crisis – from staff lay-offs to environmental disasters – can be contained and managed with pre-agreed procedures and policies. This can be activated to soften the media blow and dissipate the impact on long-term trading and market place reputation.

New appointments boost client services

Former business editor of the Newcastle Journal newspaper, **Richard Simpson** heads up a number of



recent appointments at Bradley O'Mahoney PR which strengthen client services.

Richard brings over 25 years experience in PR and journalism to the post of senior consultant and his knowledge of the region's business scene boosts what is already a powerful PR team.

He is already directing PR activity for a number of accounts including design and print specialist NB Group and VASA, a new trade organisation campaigning to raise standards in the voice alarm industry.

He has also managed the launch of the Competitiveness Project – a framework that sets out how businesses should be operating in order to meet the challenges of the new RDA industrial strategy – to commercial organisations and influencers as well as the wider community.

Eithne Beggan, with over 10 years TV experience, has joined to broaden the firm's expertise in the broadcast media. Previously with Zenith North Film, she has worked as a researcher on number of TV shows include the successful 'Dales Diary' series.

Also new is **Marie Jones**, who comes in as office manager. Marie brings over six years experience to the post, and previously worked for another local PR consultancy.

Consultancy partner Daniel O'Mahoney said: "The appointments come at a time of rapid growth for the consultancy. They are a further investment that underlines our position as the North East's leading business-to-business PR consultancy and reinforces our commitment to providing clients with the highest level of service and expertise."

To find out more about how Bradley O'Mahoney PR can help you achieve business objectives, please telephone Tony Bradley or Daniel O'Mahoney on 0191 281 8833 or e-mail us at bompr@compuserve.com

Eureka! Seminar Spotlights NPD

Marketing specialists were recently offered a very personal and unique view on the future of new product development by one of the region's foremost design experts.

Brian Wilson, director of leading industrial design company XPD, explained to delegates attending the 'Eureka!' seminar at Linden Hall, Northumberland, the integrated roles of communication and people within the new product development cycle.

The seminar also involved speakers from Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations, advertising agency Fawthrop McLanders and market research specialist Wood Holmes who outlined the product

development process from creative thinking through conceptual design and launch planning to market analysis.

Daniel O'Mahoney said: "The seminar was a unique opportunity to see how marketing functions such as design, advertising, publicity and market research can be coordinated and integrated within the overall new product development process to deliver benefits for marketing decision makers."



EUREKA!