

The Embryo Guide to Digital PR

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What Is Digital PR?

Since almost the dawn of time, there have been PR specialists who help to craft the narrative around a company or individual. When you think PR, most people think of talent agencies covering up superstar breakdowns or actor's indiscretions, to make sure their public image remains untarnished, or writing press releases about new hires, products and services for industry publications, to impress competitors and improve an organisation's public profile.

As the world of business moves increasingly online, we've seen the PR landscape change dramatically to sit where it is today. The modern Digital PR role is quite a bit different, but it's no less important. Modern Digital PR teams spend their days working in a variety of different disciplines, including traditional print journalism, online journalism, social media, SEO, data analytics, relationship management, creative campaign generation and management and much more, to provide clients with increased brand awareness and improved digital metrics.

Digital PR today is one of the cornerstones of a full digital strategy, and is one of the most versatile digital services, bringing in elements of SEO, content marketing, social media and influencer marketing and traditional PR to create innovative, interesting and click-worthy campaigns that enhance the digital and public profiles of businesses.

What Are The Benefits Of Digital PR?

- **An improved backlink profile**

Backlinks are, put simply, links to your site, from someone else. This is important, as your backlink profile (the number of backlinks you have, and the quality of the sites they come from) is recognised and analysed by search engines like Google, who take it into account when ranking a website. You can get backlinks through any number of methods, and link building is an integral art of almost any SEO strategy, which is one of the reasons SEO and Digital PR work so well together.

With Digital PR, you can get those backlinks from high-quality sites, including industry publications, as well as regional, national and internationally recognised and respected sites. These kinds of links are virtually impossible to get without a great story, which is where creative Digital PR campaigns really come into their own.

- **Generating organic reach online social media**

Digital PR helps to get your brand in front of big audiences engaged in your sector, whether that's e-commerce, professional services, health and fitness or almost anything else under the sun! Articles and pieces from national publications will get in front of far more eyes than your company blog, but these publications are also more reputable, so users are much more likely to share them with their networks on social, spreading your brand and its reputation far and wide. Plus organic recommendations are far more valued by users than those served to them by a page or company.

- **Improving the reputation and credibility of your brand**

As well as expanding your reach, Digital PR helps to improve your credibility. Think of all the times you've seen a banner reading "Featured in", followed by logos of national and industry press – that is what Digital PR can do for your credibility and reputation as an organisation.

Why Is Digital PR So Important?

Digital PR is one of the most versatile and comprehensive tools in a digital market's arsenal. It has real potential for businesses of all sizes and sectors, and will only continue to grow as search engines and their algorithms become more intelligent over time.

PR, like many digital disciplines, is becoming more numbers focused, to allow marketers and business owners alike to really capitalise on the best opportunities for them, build relationships with journalists and enhance their creative campaigns. Today's PR professionals are highly versed in online journalism and the power of data to create, enhance and build a story, and how to use data to create a narrative that companies can capitalise on, through education and insights. It's data that helps us to create new stories and narratives that engage the right journalists to get those all important placements. Data also tells marketers what works and what doesn't in almost real time, which allows us to curate our campaign ideas to get the most traction out of every story we send off.

Digital PR is also one of the hardest digital marketing channels for all-round marketers to do. Digital PR is so important mainly because it's a lot of work! PR strategists and teams need to have many different skill sets at their disposal, from relationship building and creative campaign generation, newsjacking and reactive PR, to highly granular data analysis and reporting. However, the benefits of well-executed, intelligently crafted Digital PR campaigns are simply too great to ignore!

Why Digital PR Should Be Part Of Your Multi-Channel Strategy

By now, we almost all know that a multi-channel strategy is the most effective way to work towards digital success. A complete digital strategy utilises different services to target different areas of the sales pipeline, bringing in both all-important conversions and increased brand awareness, new customers and brand loyalty, all at the same time. In today's digital landscape, and the way things look to be moving forward, no multi-channel strategy is complete without a Digital PR arm.

Digital PR is fantastic for building, expanding and strengthening a brand's reputation online. At the very top end of the funnel, Digital PR really does shine. By commenting on industry news, getting placements in relevant publications and coming up with creative, innovative and disruptive ideas to put all eyes on the clients they work with, Digital PR teams can help spread a brand much further than they could have got on their own, even with other digital channels in the mix.

Digital PR also directly supports the efforts of other digital services. The relationship between SEO and Digital PR in particular is incredibly valuable. As we've mentioned, link building is an important part of SEO strategy, so in SEO-only strategies these links can be built through relationships with other businesses through testimonials and partnerships or purchased through guest blogging for example. While these methods can be effective, there is only one way to get those high-quality, well respected links in the eyes of search engines, and that is through Digital PR.

Digital PR And B2B

For a long time, PR was considered to only be for consumer companies. After all, most B2B advertising used to be done in industry publications or by word of mouth the majority of the time. Of course, like the rest of the world, the B2B landscape has changed dramatically and now B2B companies need to be online, just the same as B2C companies!

The way decision makers operate when it comes to their partnership decisions has changed dramatically, and while word of mouth is still vital for many B2B businesses, being online and visible online, is arguably just as important. This is where Digital PR can be of huge benefit to B2B organisations, by supporting their SEO to ensure they're easily found by search engines, and that they have a reputable trail of press coverage behind them to provide credibility and make an excellent first impression.

Digital PR campaigns are also incredibly scaleable to the needs of a business. For many B2B organisations, the value of being featured in a national lifestyle magazine is nothing compared to a local or industry publication – while readership and visibility might be lower, these are the placements that matter. We understand that every single business and campaign is different and adjust our strategies accordingly.

Digital PR Tools

There are lots of great tools available to help with Digital PR campaigns. Here are just a few:

- **Google Trends** - This is a great way to keep track on key topics in the news to help plan reactive PR campaigns.
- **Answer the public** – Understand searches from a 'public perspective' in order to create releases that answer who, what, why and when.
- **Ahrefs** – A data tool which measures the search volume of keywords.
- **LinkInfluence** – Use this to track social media shares and the sentiment behind posts online.

There are also a range of tools to help analyse the success of campaigns:

- **Coverage Book** – Understand the visibility and power of your Digital PR campaigns by seeing the amount of article views and social media shares. These extra metrics enable you to report on how online journalism builds brand awareness on a bigger scale.
- **Ahrefs** – Again Ahrefs is great to check for natural coverage and further backlinks gained from PR campaigns.
- **Google Alerts** – Setting up alerts for certain keywords will enable you to be notified when an article has gone live.



What To Measure?

"Traditional PR" was often considered to be very difficult to measure the success of, with no real way of telling how well a campaign has done other than word of mouth! Modern, dynamic Digital PR campaigns couldn't be more different, and Digital PR teams will monitor a range of KPIs to help understand how different campaigns are working, and to apply their findings to future campaigns. These are just a few common KPIs that a PR team might use to monitor campaign results:

- **Backlinks** – this is the number of links to a client's site that a campaign generates, which tells teams how many articles and posts have linked to a client's website. Increasing the number and quality of the backlinks to a site is a really positive signal to Google and other search engines, as it indicates that the site is trusted, informative and valuable since other trusted sites and publishers are linking out to them.
- **Referral & Organic Traffic** – monitoring website traffic when a campaign goes live can tell PR teams how many new users are interested in a company's products or services having seen them mentioned in the press. We can also see how much of this traffic actually converts through a purchase or enquiry and actually makes money for the company off the back of their PR investment.
- **Impressions** – looking at the number of users who see articles about the campaign is vital, as it offers useful insights into the topics that are popular, that are successful and that serve to really make a difference to clients in the long run.
- **Shares** – similarly, the number of shares of articles, coverage and blog posts that are shared by users on social media not just expands the reach of a piece, but also tells PR teams which topics really resonate with the target audience.

Best Practices/ Top Tips

Digital PR is an incredibly diverse discipline, and many organisations and individuals think it's an easy and quick strategy to use, without realising how much consideration, strategy, testing, time and energy goes into the most successful Digital PR campaigns.

Here are some top tips from our Head of Digital PR, **Jo Threlfall**:

- Be aware of your client's market and find ways to ensure that you hit their desired KPIs.
- Understanding the media landscape and thinking more outside of the box is vital when it comes to creating Digital PR campaigns.
- Be prepared to adapt campaigns as the news changes everyday and your creative idea may no longer be a strong enough hook to get the media's attention.
- Communication and organisation is key when it comes to outreaching a Digital PR campaign as you've got to keep on top of your pitches and ensure your leads with reporters do not slip through the cracks.
- Patience is key when running a successful campaign, as the first batch of emails may not get you instant media coverage. You will have to be prepared to chase reporters (up to 4 follow-ups) and adapt your outreach methods in order to secure your desired results for your client.



Summary

- 1 The world of PR looks very different to the way many people imagine it, and Digital PR even more so.
- 2 By using Digital PR, companies can both enhance their overall brand identity and their backlink profile.
- 3 Digital PR is an integral part of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy, and can support other digital channels effectively.
- 4 Using both seasonal and reactive campaign models, Digital PR is increasingly fast-paced and requires strong management to get the very best results.
- 5 Digital PR strategists use a variety of intelligent tools and data to provide tangible feedback on campaign ideas and results.
- 6 Measuring campaign success for Digital PR comes in many different forms, which can help companies understand the value of PR and the impact that it has on their Digital presence.

We combine our search heritage with content marketing and traditional PR expertise.

Our creative thinking, detailed research, and expert knowledge of how journalists operate, enables us to develop engaging campaigns that connect you to a larger online audience.

We do this by producing content and stories that you, as a brand, have authority to discuss, that journalists want to cover, and that audiences want to read.

The culmination of these efforts makes your site authority, and search rankings improve significantly.

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