

PUBLIC RELATIONS COLLECTION

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THE PR KNOWLEDGE BOOK

Sangeeta Waldron

SERENDIPITY PR & MEDIA LTD



The PR Knowledge Book

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Sangeeta Waldron



BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS

The PR Knowledge Book

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This book is dedicated to Steve and Rory Waldron, my husband and son; who are my dream team, who support me in everything I do. This book is for you—#teamwaldron—and of course my mum, who has empowered me, by giving me an education.

Praise for *The PR Knowledge Book*

“Knowledge is power and this book is powerful knowledge. Clear, direct and creative: it explains the digital landscape of PR for practitioners and clients alike.”

—**Julia Hobsbawm OBE**, editor-at-large, THRIVE Global,
and author, *Fully Connected: Social Health in an
Age of Overload*

“Smart and efficient PR is becoming even more critical now than ever for brands, with the advent of the digital world. *The PR Knowledge Book* from the expert Sangeeta Waldron helps businesses to unlock opportunities and to maneuver through challenges in a fast changing world. Highly Recommended.”

—**Jérôme Chouchan**, Godiva Chocolatier, president,
Japan, South Korea, Asia, and Australia

“In a modern, digital, global business world, Sangeeta Waldron shows how to turn Public Relations into Personal Relations, which is absolutely essential to survive in the long run.”

—**Erik Korsvik Ostergaard**, leadership advisor, published author,
and guest lecturer at the Copenhagen Business School

“Sangeeta is a seasoned PR professional and her wisdom is captured within this book. It’s just what the doctor ordered!”

—**Professor Jonathan A.J. Wilson**, PhD, partner at Dragonfly Black,
LinkedIn Top Voices award winner

“This book provides extraordinary insights and provides real world lessons on how business leaders can employ PR to support their business objectives.”

—**Jill Totenberg**, CEO, The Totenberg Group, New York

“I greatly welcome this book that helps us reimagine PR as ‘People Relations’, a vital tool for empowering brand and business creation in a connected world.”

—**Dr. Harbeen Arora**, founder, BIOAYURVEDA, ALL Ladies League,
and Women Economic Forum, India

“Sangeeta Waldron has written a must-read for anyone wanting to do their own PR, wherever they may be in the world. Read this book—and learn from one of the best.”

—**Rusen Kumar**, editor-in-chief, India CSR Network

“Sangeeta Waldron is a trusted colleague and inspiration. *The PR Knowledge Book* shares practical and proven strategies from the front lines of PR. She outlines the building blocks of creating a Brand and PR plan that delivers results by building relationships. Business is personal. It’s about relationships. That’s the bottom line.”

—**Tami Belt**, author and founder, Blue Cube
Marketing Solutions, Las Vegas

“Sangeeta Waldron has an intuitive understanding of what PR is and how it works. She is able to cut through the noise to simply and powerfully communicate an idea, and now, with her book, you can, too.”

—**Tom Seabrook**, commissioning book editor, Jawbone Press

“As an entrepreneur this book is going to be permanently on my bookshelf. My go to guide on how to create publicity and deal with traditional and new media.”

—**Raja Majid**, Las Vegas entrepreneur

“If PR has always baffled you, then this is the book to read. Written in an easy style with lots of examples. It will become your best-friend.”

—**Asian Voice Newspaper**, the UK and Europe’s
leading Asian newspaper

“Sangeeta Waldron brings heart and soul to the business of PR. Her knowledge and wisdom were a key contribution to my organization finding its way through a rocky time. She is a superb educator in addition to being an outstanding practitioner of her art. A timely and valuable book.”

—**Malcolm Stern**, Co-founder and Co-director

Abstract

The PR Knowledge Book is for everyone irrespective of where you are in the world—whether a student starting out in this industry or self-employed, a home business, small business, start-up, charity, or any other type of organization wanting to embark on your PR journey or just plain curious about what it entails. This book covers everything within the world of PR from how to create a brand, how to use social media, how to be newsworthy, to how to contact the media, how to have a global mind-set, the power of networking, and more. It is written in an easy style, packed with powerful tips, proven tools, and real-life case studies from around the world. In 12 chapters you will discover how to get your brand out there so you can attract clients and new business.

Keywords

brands; crisis; management; Facebook; global mind-set; Instagram; journalists; LinkedIn; measurement; media; networking; newsworthy; press releases; public relations; social media; storytelling; Twitter; YouTube

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Foreword

**S.E. Feinberg, author, screenwriter,
and playwright**

Andy Warhol once said, “Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.” Warhol revolutionized the art world by recognizing and appreciating the power of public relations, and changed how we perceive commercial images—accepting those images as fine art—melding his art with what we already knew as familiar. When I hung a poster of a can of Campbell’s soup on my wall, I was not only looking at a can of soup but was also remembering what the product meant to me, nostalgically—the necessity of the familiar.

The PR Knowledge Book brings public relations into the realm of necessity as we do business each day, because it reveals to the world what we hold dear—our products, ourselves, our dreams.

“It’s all about the timing,” Sangeeta often will explain to me, “everything has its time.” Sangeeta is right. Timing is at the core of an effective public relations campaign—to control the dissemination of information at the right time, to the right people, in the right way. In Chapter 9, “Pitching to the Media,” referring to disseminating stories to the news, Sangeeta points out, “Timing is Crucial—Find out the working hours of reporters and their deadlines so you can ensure your contact and supply of material caters to their needs.” In Chapter 3, “The Press Release,” we read, “Depending on the news story you will need to decide the timing of your story, so the journalists clearly understand when they can publish the story.”

Case in point: Shortly after Sangeeta’s friend and client, P.F. Sloan, the legendary composer, was given only weeks to live, she hopped on a plane to visit him—to take care of his professional needs at a time of imminent death, and to bid farewell to a dear friend. When she arrived in Los Angeles, I suggested that she wait until the next morning, because

Phil was feeling so poorly and could barely speak. He told me that he was embarrassed and would prefer to visit with her the next morning. Before Sangeeta arrived at the house, Phil passed. That day, Sangeeta and I got together. I was full of anxiety. Sangeeta was calm. “We must do this right,” Sangeeta told me. “We must make sure that we control the copy that goes out to the press and control the who and the when.”

Although so sad over the loss of our friend, we sat in a Starbucks on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles and wrote the copy to announce to the world that the music of P.F. Sloan had come to an end—keeping the entire music world and fans of Phil unaware that they had lost him. In spite of this pressure, Sangeeta controlled the ball. She methodically moved through the process in the most pure form. This was PR at its best—grace under pressure, a balanced temperament, and the knowledge of what had to be done, with unflinching attention to detail.

“It’s all about the timing,” she pointed out. “What happens next?” I asked. “We give it to *Rolling Stone* first,” she said. “They will expect it first.”

After we wrote the copy, Sangeeta delivered the news to *Rolling Stone* and, in 15 minutes, every paper was picking it up. Radio stations were broadcasting it, the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and all the major newspapers and periodicals, hundreds and hundreds of stories around the world, as well as Internet and radio. Sangeeta’s work, at a very critical time, insured that the legacy of her client was in place, and in order.

In my years of working with Sangeeta, I have learned to trust her as a person and depend on her instincts and wise counsel as a public relations professional. She is tenacious, sensitive, and brilliant. There is an efficient coolness to her method of communicating on behalf of her client. She possesses the precious gift of being able to explain the mechanics of her plan, simply and succinctly, as she lays out the art of public relations.

Sangeeta’s methods are built on a bedrock of honesty, which in turn creates integrity, which in turn creates trust. In Chapter 2, “How to Be Newsworthy and What Is Fake News,” she writes, “We need to be vigilant and on top of where our brand content is being placed. Media brands need to put reclaiming and maintaining consumer trust at the top of their agenda.”

In Chapter 1, “The Basics of Public Relations,” Sangeeta points out, “The fundamentals of PR are good communications, being able to tell

your story in an easily understood way and for your story to have integrity and honesty.” Further, she notes, “Every one of us is an individual whose character is made up of beliefs, values, and purposes that define who we are and who we connect with....”

I have been waiting for a book like this for a very long time. This will serve as an effective and required tool for those who desire to market themselves or their products to a competitive and complicated world. The mystery of public relations is unraveled in this essential work, *The PR Knowledge Book*.

Preface

I have always wanted to write a book since I was 12 years old and always had thought my first book would be fiction! Forty years later, I have written a business book focused on my trade and experience—public relations (PR)—and I could not be prouder. I have written this book in an easy style, demystifying the world of PR and media, making it a book for everyone irrespective where you may be in the world—whether you are a student starting out in this industry or a business, “homepreneur,” mumpreneur, charity, start-up, or any other type of organization wanting to embark on your PR journey or just plain curious about what it entails.

When you work for yourself, you have to learn many different skills to survive. PR, social media, and marketing are probably the most important ones of all. Over the years, people have always asked me what is PR, and what does it actually do? What does it mean? Well, this book answers those questions, and shows you how to do it, particularly in today’s digital and online world. Without getting your brand out there, how can you attract clients and new business? If you want to get ahead in the game, then this is the book for you. It has been written, and set out, to really help you get to grips with PR.

It is packed with powerful tips, proven tools, and real-life examples and case studies from around the world. By the end of this book you will realize that PR can change the trajectory of any business to become a winner.

CHAPTER 1

The Basics of Public Relations

We are all living in the era of digital communications, irrespective of where we might be residing globally. The United Nations in 2013 reported that more people in the world had mobile phones than access to a toilet. A staggering statistic and you may be wondering how does this fit into the context of public relations (PR) for a small- to medium-sized business or other type of organization? Well, it shows that over half of the world's population is now online, with the latest data showing that nearly a quarter of a billion new users came online for the first time in 2017. Africa has seen the fastest growth rates, with the number of Internet users across the continent increasing by more than 20 percent year-on-year (2018 Global Digital reports from We Are Social and Hootsuite).

Put this into the perspective of PR, it means digital communications is driving PR, where the three most important trends are affecting its future—social listening, digital storytelling, and real-time marketing. This in turn means there is no better time to be in business, an entrepreneur, an author, start-up, charity, or any other kind of small-sized to medium-sized organization. The power of success is with you and a strong PR plan.

This thought has been eloquently summed up by Mike Cherry, OBE, National Chairman, Federation of Small Business in January 2019, when he said,

It has never been a more relevant time for a small businesses and the self-employed to put in place PR plans. Increasingly competitive markets, new export opportunities, diversification of audiences, fragmented and diverse channels of communications, as well as channels posed by regulations and cybercrime all create an environment of both opportunity and threat. PR is needed to

seize the former and minimize the latter. Many small businesses can also increasingly be effected by consumer generated content—from online reviews, to social media debate. This alone can make effective PR a must. (CIPR’s A guide to selecting PR agencies and independent practitioners p. 3)

So, let me welcome you to the world of PR. An industry that involves creative ideas and thoughts, and then being able to communicate them via the media, which are magazines, newspapers, television, radio, and social media channels such as Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube.

PR is for everyone; there is no them or us—it is for all business types and sectors; everyone can benefit from this discipline. The purpose of PR is to raise the profile of an organization or promote a campaign/initiative—because we all know that age-old adage that “awareness drives consideration.”

While everyone seems to know the term “public relations,” not everyone really understands what it means. Many business and organizations understand that PR is a great way to build on their strategies and improve their online reputation, yet few really know what it involves. Essentially, it is about sending the right messages to the right places and people, to build your brand’s reputation. It is a dynamic that could change the future of your business.

Why Is PR Important?

There are four reasons why public relations is important.

- *PR Increases Brand Awareness and Credibility*

In any industry, trust plays a huge role in determining whether a business is successful; a lack of trust could mean that a brand loses opportunities. When you invest in PR, it can help to increase credibility by improving a business or organization’s reputation through thought leadership pieces and media coverage, influencer connections, and networking strategies. The more people that are aware of your brand, the more success and opportunities you create for your business.

- *PR Enhances Your Online Presence and Profile*

In a world where everyone is digitally connected, PR helps companies to make the most of their online presence through social media, press releases, and connections. With the right PR strategy approach, today's brands can make sure that they reach the right audiences.

- *PR Drives Profits, Sales, and Leads*

Part of PR is marketing. When you enhance your reputation through a range of unique PR activities, you will be reaching out to new potential customers and clients, who will find more ways to connect with your business through your business stories, press releases, and online activities. PR will help you to craft the right messages to resonate with your target audience and then place your story with the right media; and now with online media, it means people can click and buy.

- *PR Changes the Way People Think About You, Your Brand, and Business*

The trouble with the online world is that people can say anything they want about a company—regardless of whether it is true or not, and there is very little that business can do about it. Some businesses get a bad reputation unfairly, while other organizations are not on the right people's radar. By creating a PR plan to focus on PR campaigns, it can help turn these challenges around because the right actions and PR support can raise awareness for your brand in the right way.

The fundamentals of PR are good communications, being able to tell your story in an easily understood way and for your story to have integrity and honesty. To help us do this, I believe there are three wisdoms, which we all need to imbibe before embarking on our PR journey and are:

1. Always remember that PR is about *people* and *relationships*;
2. *Business is always personal and about relationships*. We buy from people and brands we like;
3. *Trust your instincts*. Some of the best PR has been created by people trusting their instincts. Sir Richard Branson, the British entrepreneur who is fantastic at publicizing the Virgin brands, openly talks

about trusting his instincts and has said publicly, “I definitely go on gut instinct.”

Knowing Your Brand

Before you get started on your PR plan and campaign, it is important to know who you are as a brand. Branding is just as important for small businesses as it is for big names. Yet the many small business owners I talk to, who understand that branding is essential to their business, still do not really know why. While others are confused about their own brand identity, if you do not know your brand, how can you expect others to know what you do and what you stand for?

Many small business owners recognize the link between successful businesses and strong branding and want to build a brand that creates similar success for themselves. They know that branding is not just a logo or how their business is perceived externally, but too few realize that successful brands have branding at the heart of their business. So much so that, you could almost substitute the word brand for business.

Branding is a way of defining your business to yourself, your team, and your customers/your external audiences. It could be called the business’ “identity,” but only on the understanding that it embodies the core of what the business is and its values, not just what it looks and sounds like.

Customers of all sorts of businesses are so savvy today that they can see through most attempts by companies to gloss, spin, or charm their way to sales. Therefore, the benefits that a *strategically defined brand* can bring are the same as when people fall in love with each other!

When customers connect—because they share the same values and beliefs as the brand—it leads to higher sales and better brand differentiation. A strong brand encourages loyalty and advocacy. It can even protect your price in times when competitors rely on promotional discounts to drive sales. Your brand can also give you the ideal platform from which to extend your offering or range. Here are ten tips on how to successfully create branding for your business:

1. *Start by defining your brand*

Review the product or service your business offers. Pinpoint the space in the market it occupies and research the emotive drivers, rational

needs, and concerns of your customers. Your brand character should promote your business, connect with your customer base, and differentiate you in the market.

2. *When building your brand, think of it as a person*

Every one of us is an individual whose character is made up of beliefs, values, and purposes that define who we are and who we connect with—our personality determines how we behave in different situations, how we dress, and what we say. Of course, for people it is intuitive and it is rare that you even consider what your own character is, but when you're building a brand it is vital to have that understanding.

3. *What is driving your business*

What does it believe in, what is its purpose, and who are its brand heroes; these things can help establish your emotive brand positioning and inform the identity and character for brand communications.

4. *Aim to build long-term relationships with your customers*

Do not dress up your offering and raise expectations that result in broken promises, instead create trust with honest branding—be clear who your company is and be true to the values that drive it every day.

5. *Speak to your customers with a consistent tone of voice*

It will help reinforce the business' character and clarify its offering, so customers are aware exactly what to expect from the product or service.

6. *Do not try to mimic the look of big brands*

Try and carve out your own distinctive identity. There is now a big consumer trend toward independent businesses, and there have been several chains who have tried to mimic independents in order to capture some of the market. Truly independent operators can leverage their status to attract customers looking for something more original and authentic, which actually aligns with how they feel about themselves.

7. *Be innovative, bold, and daring—stand for something you believe in*

Big brands are bogged down by layers of bureaucracy, preventing them from being flexible and reacting to the ever-changing needs of their customers. Those layers of decision making can make it hard for them to be daring with their branding.

8. *Always consider your branding when communicating with customers*

Respect your customers' intelligence by not giving everything away up front. Generate some intrigue and allow them to find out more

about your brand for themselves. This is the way to foster both engagement and ambassadors who enjoy in telling other people what they have discovered.

9. *The future of branding is fluid and engaging*

Do not dilute your brand positioning with indiscriminate discounting. Promotions are an opportunity to reinforce your brand mission.

Defining your core brand values helps define your brand identity and guides all your company's decisions. Your organization's core values also make sure everyone is going in the same direction and automatically helps you to:

1. Attract better customers and staff;
2. Know how to pitch your business to the media;
3. What kind of collaborations and partnerships you are open to create and who you want to work with; and
4. If you are a service-led business, it helps you decide how and what you are selling.

Howard Schultz, who was the CEO of Starbucks from 1986 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2017, as well as its executive chairman from 2017 to 2018, said, "If people believe they share values with a company, they will stay loyal to the brand" (SucceedFeed.com for Howard Schultz Quotes <https://succeedfeed.com/howard-schultz-quotes/>).

How to Define Your Brand Values?

I always recommend that a business should not have more than five brand values; five are easy to remember. Make them simple and that they are values that you believe in as an entrepreneur/business. People can see through anything that you are paying lip service to and they will need to be values that help define your services.

If you are able to get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time. The good news is that core values can help you achieve this! The bad news is that in most organizations, if you ask

four employees to articulate the company's core values, you get four different answers.

Some organizations have not set defined their core values, while other places created their core values years ago, where over time people and things have changed, as a result the core values need a refresh. Start by brainstorming a list and group similar ideas together, deleting those that are not essential. Some businesses base their values on sustainable initiatives and thoughts, while some are based on leadership and fairness.

Through discussion and reflection, you will eventually get to a short, key list. Make sure everyone in the business is genuinely happy with the core values. Once they are defined, announce them throughout the organization and use them; core values are meaningless if they are not used by everyone within the organization.

Case Stories

The iconic Coca Cola company defines its values on its official website under “mission and values” as:

- Leadership: The courage to shape a better future
- Collaboration: Leverage collective genius
- Integrity: Be real
- Accountability: If it is to be, it's up to me
- Passion: Committed in heart and mind
- Diversity: As inclusive as our brands
- Quality: What we do, we do well

A UK wellbeing client called Alternatives, a not-for-profit organization, which works with some of the biggest names in the wellbeing space, such as Deepak Chopra, Marianne Williamson, and Elizabeth Gilbert, created five key brand values:

- Love
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Inclusive
- Service

The Essar Foundation, which comes under the Essar Global Fund Ltd that is based in India, call their values the four P's:

- People
- Progress
- Power
- Passion

Another example is from a photographer, I worked with years ago, whose business is called Vivida Productions, who at that time, venturing into the world of videos specifically for the Asian wedding market, but he was not Asian himself and defined his brand values as:

- Films not videos—we produce beautifully, crafted films;
- Love and family are at the heart of what we do;
- We always work with integrity.

Today his brand value has evolved to, “bringing stories to life.”

Once you have defined your brand values, do not shove them away in a drawer; be proud of them, display them where you and your staff can see them; and if you have a shop, where your customers can see them too. Remember they are powerful and important.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

After defining your brand values, I always think it is a good idea to create something called a *SWOT Analysis*, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is an exercise used in marketing.

Years ago, when I started out as the first head of PR for a national UK organization called the National Federation of Women's Institutes, my mentor at that time introduced me to doing a SWOT Analysis and it was very useful, because it helped define the PR strategy I was attempting to write at the time. It is a tool that I still use today, even when I am trying to make home decisions. Again, there is nothing complicated about doing a SWOT Analysis, it is easy and just requires some quiet thinking. It works

Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
Organic ingredients	No staff—just me	Social media and local media	Falling ill—no one to step-in
Everything is baked on the premises	Not enough time to do everything	Create a tasting event	Not able to bake enough produce
Some of the breads and cake recipes are family recipes—unique	New to area/community	Run a promotion on cakes	No staff resources
Trained baker	No one to do admin/stocks	Get in touch with local network groups	
Won an award on the course		Support a local charity	

Figure 1.1 *SWOT analysis grid about here*

whether you are an existing business or start-up. It helps to oversee a situation and can feed into your business strategy. It arranges your top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats into an organized list.

Your strengths and weaknesses are internal to your business—things that you have some control over, can change or improve. Examples include your expertise, knowledge, who is on your team, gaps in the team, reputation, and your location. Your opportunities and threats are external—things that are going on outside of your business. You can always take advantage of opportunities and protect against threats. Examples of these include competitors, new regulations, culture, technology, media, and customer shopping trends. You can always turn weaknesses into opportunities by finding solutions. Figure 1.1 presents a diagram of a SWOT Analysis, which has been completed by a start-up bakery run by one person.

The Power of the Story

The story is where we have all come from and has been part of our lives since the beginning of time. Stories connect us and are the best way to teach, persuade, and even understand ourselves. They are emotional, where we are more likely to remember and react to them. A compelling

story, well told, grabs hearts and minds. The first printed story, the “Epic of Gilgamesh,”² was created and then begun to spread from Mesopotamia to other parts of Europe and Asia. The story was carved on stone pillars for all to see, which spread the tale around very quickly.

The advent of technology has and will continue to advance the power of the story. Technology is about sharing information; and sharing stories to create content is a key factor for personal branding and business success.

What Does Storytelling in Business Mean?

Storytelling is used as a tool in business in many areas, from leadership to branding to PR campaigns, messaging, and fundraising. We know that everyone loves a story, it helps to engage people to listen to you, and in PR, your story will help you in many different ways. From talking to the media, to being used on your “home or about page on your website” to being incorporated on your social media channels. Crucially, stories are the best way to distinguish yourself from the other brands in your industry.

We know that consumers are savvy and can smell if something is not “true” and, with social media and the Internet, you cannot get away with making things up. Not being truthful can end up creating negative publicity, which is a whole chapter—Chapter 10 to be exact!

You will hear a term, time and time again in brand storytelling, *engagement* and as with any content, the subject matter needs to be relevant and interesting if it is going to engage.

Therefore, the three important elements of a good story are:

1. Make sure it is your story;
2. Be authentic and real; and
3. Be engaging.

² The Epic of Gilgamesh is an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia that is often regarded as the earliest surviving great work of literature. The literary history of Gilgamesh begins with five Sumerian poems about Bilgamesh, king of Uruk, dating from the Third Dynasty of Ur. For more into this story, go to Britannica’s Epic of Gilgamesh (<https://britannica.com/topic/Epic-of-Gilgamesh>).

Major brands such as Lego and Coca Cola and have become industry icons because of their fondness for storytelling. If you rely only on your services and offering, you will become just another brand that is not able to differentiate itself from the others. You have to stand out.

Crafting Your Brand Story

Mark Truby, VP of Communications for Ford Motor Company, has beautifully summed up what makes a good brand story when he said, “A good story makes you feel something and is universal. They want to grasp your values and your commitment to excellence; be inspired and intrigued. Storytelling is the most powerful way to convey these ideas” (Marketing Week 2016).

Armed with your brand values and your SWOT Analysis to help you, you can now start to create your own brand story. Your brand story is about your passion of why you decided to start your business; it is why you do, what you do. It could be a childhood dream or love, or a hobby that has become an ambition. Start simple; use easy language, descriptive words. Write your past, present, and future story; incorporate your brand values. Your brand story is not about selling, it is about engaging and needs to resonate with your customers.

Case Stories

The Body Shop’s brand story has stood the test of time and was the first in the beauty industry to make fair trade their priority; it completely revolutionized the whole sector. Founded by the late Anita Roddick who decided to open a small shop selling cosmetics. Anita traveled widely and wanted to use the rituals and customs she had encountered on her trips, into her back-to-nature products. Anita encouraged minimal packaging, including all forms of recycling and reusing, which was all about being sustainable. Anita also felt very strongly about animal testing. All these strong values helped shape the Body Shop’s brand story from the very beginning. You can read more about the Body Shop and its founder, Anita Roddick by visiting their official website (www.bodyshop.com).

Nike is another famous brand story, which has been leveraging the power of great storytelling since 1999, when it released a one-minute

commercial that commemorated the career of Michael Jordan. Nike was clever and ahead of its time; there was no mention of the brand itself in that film, until the end when the Nike slogan of “Just Do It” appeared at the end. Nike understood that this would make a lasting impression—it was an authentic story. ESPN on its website gives a wonderful insightful account into how Nike made this famous collaboration happen (http://espn.com/blog/playbook/dollars/post/_/id/2918/how-nike-landed-michael-jordan).

A wonderful and heartfelt brand story is from a small business working globally in children and adult learning difficulties, who started their business because of their own son who was diagnosed with autism. It was because of their own experiences of trying to find the right support, that they started their own organization.

This is another brand story, while again not a famous or a big brand, it still captures the spirit of a brand story. An online business passionate about the environment, called Unwrpd is an online store that wants to help consumers reduce their consumption of single-use plastics. Unwrpd has carefully tested and curated a selection of zero-waste alternative consumer goods, focusing on sourcing plastic-free, minimally packaged alternatives to disposable, single-use plastics and implementing buy-for-life and reusable products wherever possible.

I also love the brand story of Indian chef, Manoj Vasaikar originally from Mumbai, whose love and dedication to authentic Indian cooking with a twist has paid off, as he has founded his own restaurant, Indian Zing, which is a multi-award winning restaurant in London, hailed by leading food critics. His food is designed to follow the Indian principles of “Vastu Shastra,”² creating an environmental harmony between the five elements of earth, sky, fire, water, and air.

Know Your Stakeholders

All stories should be tailored to your stakeholders. Stakeholders take on many forms—internal employees, customers, governmental regulators,

² Vastu Shastra is an ancient Indian science of harmony and prosperous living by eliminating negative and enhancing positive energies around us. For more information go to Vastu Shastra Guru at <https://vastushastraguru.com/>

and even your competitors. A good story relates to the needs of those stakeholders; each may require a slightly different approach to creating the story.

Knowing Your Customers

Essentially this is knowing who you are selling to from a marketing PR perspective who are your customers and who are you talking to. “Customer” can take on many different meanings. In a sales campaign, it may be who will purchase a product. In a governmental affairs campaign, it may be significant elected officials. In a corporate campaign, it may be internal employees. When you have defined who your customers are, you then know where you want to gain media coverage, what magazines you want to be featured in, what radio shows will have the right listeners for you.

Understanding your customer also means you know how to engage with them and what their interests will be, so you are able to create tailored products, services, and promotions—which are all in the PR mix.

Getting to know your customers is simple; you just have to talk to them, and you can do this through some simple market research.

There are a number of tools to help, some of which are free:

- If you have a website, Google Analytics is a great tool. It is free and generates detailed statistics about activity on a website. On its website, Google explains that the system “helps you analyze visitor traffic and paint a complete picture of your audience and their needs, wherever they are along the path to purchase” (Google; <https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/analytics>).
- Conduct an online survey, where you can create a questionnaire and send it to your social media followers and/or e-mail subscribers and then quantify the results. To get people to participate in the survey, incentivize with a prize or reward.

Start to get to know your customers personally. This is one for more established businesses. Take some extra time to get to know them on a personal level—remember PR is about relationships. Find out what they are concerned about when they talk to you. What appeals to them, or excites them?

Knowing Your Competitors

What you do not want to do is copy or imitate your competitor, because how do you then attract customers? There is room for everyone and clients will buy from the business and brands that appeals to them, which could be based on your brand values, your brand story, and how well you know your customers. I believe the streets of New York City demonstrates this perfectly and, when I am there, I enjoy walking down the streets in the early mornings, where you will find different independent coffee houses, side-by-side, all buzzing and busy with customers. It shows how there is room for everyone and that customers will buy from the businesses that they like and “buy into.”

I have worked with so many businesses and start-ups who want to be just like their competition including their website design, their logo look, and feel. I always say, “How will visitors know that they have landed on your website, if you look just like your competition?!”

Be bold, be different. It also allows you to take on new trends and be newsworthy, which is very attractive to the media, who are always looking for new ideas, new products, and new brands—because that makes news.

Summary

Chapter 1 gets us off to a good and firm start, where we now have a strong understanding of PR, where it has been demystified and broken down. You are now ready to define your brand, work on your brand story, identify your audience, and know who your competitors are; these are the main ingredients to getting started on your PR journey. With these in place, you will be ready to start thinking about how to be newsworthy, which is the focus of the next chapter.

In Chapter 2, we get to grips with how your news story will be the backbone of your PR campaign, which essentially is your pitch to the media and can determine the success of your PR activities. We will look at how to hone your media message, which further helps to build brand awareness, and yes, it all fits and loops together, back to what you have learnt here in Chapter 1.

The PR Knowledge Book

SANGEETA WALDRON

The PR Knowledge Book is for everyone, irrespective of where you are in the world—whether a student starting out in this industry, self-employed, a home business, small business, start-up, charity, or any other type of organization wanting to embark on your PR journey or someone just plain curious about what it entails.

This book covers everything within the world of PR from how to create a brand, how to use social media, how to be newsworthy, to how to contact the media, how to have a global mind-set, the power of networking, and more. It is written in an easy style, packed with powerful tips, proven tools, and real-life case studies from around the world. In 12 chapters you will discover how to get your brand out there so you can attract clients and new business.

Sangeeta Waldron is a multi-award-winning public relations and media professional with over two decades' worth of publicity, branding, communications, crisis management, media, and social media experience. She started out her career writing speeches for a previous UK prime minister and cabinet ministers, and has also worked at the top level for big, powerful global brands, which includes global communications director for the Economist Group; working for The Times Education Supplement; the Mayor of London; World Health Organization; Cass Business School; and charities such as Breast Cancer Campaign.

Today, she runs her own successful London-based PR agency, Serendipity PR & Media Ltd, working across business, arts, culture, and books in growth international markets. She is also an award-winning journalist, specializing in sustainability and corporate social responsibility, where her stories have been picked up by the United Nations and *The Guardian* newspaper. As an international speaker, she also sits on different boards and believes in the power of paying it forward.



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