

Plain Talk- What is Public Relations?

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SPEAKERS

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RP 00:02

Welcome to Plain Talk, a podcast dedicated to bringing useful marketing advertising and public relations tips and information to small and micro businesses, nonprofits and beyond, hosted by the team at In Plain Sight Marketing. We're excited you're here.

Olivia Mooring 00:20

Hi, I'm Olivia, and welcome to Plain Talk with In Plain Sight Marketing. I have Kathie Taylor on today and she's going to talk a little bit about public relations. So going into that, Kathie, what is public relations?

Kathie Taylor 00:35

So as defined by the Public Relations Society of America public relations is it's a strategic communication process building mutually beneficial relationships for an organization and its publics.

Olivia Mooring 00:51

Awesome, can you dive a little deeper and tell me what that means?

Kathie Taylor 00:55

What that means? In plain talk? In plain talk, it means basically, public relations is a methodical process driven way of building relationships with your audiences, whether it's community relations, media relations, government relations, anything like that. It's building relationships. So if you think about marketing, it's mostly transactional, it's I serve you up an ad and you buy my stuff, where public relations is more about building relationships, long term relationships, and then creating mutual benefit for both the organization and the people.

Olivia Mooring 01:38

Okay, and so, going into PR, what are some of the projects you've worked on that are related to public relations with your clients?

Kathie Taylor 01:50

Oh, my gosh, the two that come to mind. For me, we have a client who was trying to build a meat processing facility in a rural ranching community and so we did a lot of public outreach where we had events that people could come and tour the facility, or we had another evening event where people could come out and speak to the engineers on the project to see if they had concerns about water usage, or just the project itself, they could speak to the people who are designing the project. So that was one a lot of community outreach, a lot of speaking with our government leaders, to try to educate them on the process in the plant. And then another one we did that was really, really cool is we had a school for students on the autism spectrum and they were in need of help getting people to take tours at the school, there wasn't a lot of education in a large county about this small school for students. And so we did a series of videos with families talking about the impact that the school had and we placed strategic ads and strategic paid content, stories and videos about these families. And we were able to turn it around and double the number of people coming in for tours and they were able to keep the doors open because they had enough students coming in. So it could be anywhere from talking to families about a small school to trying to change perceptions of projects that people don't like, involves a lot of tactics.

Olivia Mooring 03:34

Yeah, it sounds like you can get a lot of like amazing stuff done through PR for sure, though. So we talked a lot about earned media and own media. Can you tell me what those are and why they're important?

Kathie Taylor 03:48

Yeah, so in public relations, we kind of go by this model that was introduced by Gini Dietrich, has a company called Spin Sucks and she's like this PR guru, and we love her. And she came up with what they call the PESO model. And if you can picture, a Venn diagram with four circles, it's paid media, earned media, shared media, and owned media, and each of those things are different. So when you think about public relations, most people think, Oh, they write press releases and talk to reporters all day, but we do a lot of things. So paid media is let's say, it's an expert column that we pay for placement in a newspaper or online or something, or it's ads or whatever, that's paid media. And then earned media is media basically that we receive due to our efforts. So if I put out a press release, and a news organization gets that press release and says, Wow, this is a cool story. I want to talk to those people and I'm going to put you on my broadcast tonight. That's an example of earned media. We didn't pay for the placement we earned the placement based on the content that we put out. And then shared media is anytime that you share a social media post, or something like that, it's something that it was created by someone else and that you shared it or they shared something I created. And then owned media is stuff that I create. So it's my blog posts, it's white papers, it's survey results, it's my own social media posts, that's owned media. So we use all four of those, when we're crafting strategies on how we're going to reach people to make those build those mutually beneficial relationships. Because people receive information in different ways. So we take all of those things into consideration when we're building our plans.

Olivia Mooring 05:42

Awesome. So when you're creating this project plan, what typically, do you need to have a good campaign? What does it take?

Kathie Taylor 05:52

Any good campaign that has four clear things, and this is based on public relations concepts, and we call the first one is RPIE, research, planning, implementation and evaluation, and you have to have all of those things to make a good campaign, because anytime you put out a campaign, whether it's a public relations or a marketing campaign, you're basically building a hypothesis. So it's kind of scientific if you think about it. You have a hypothesis that if I do all of these things, all of these people are going to buy my stuff, or use my service or whatever you're trying to get out there and so the research component is really important, because it tells us what's happening in the marketplace. Who are the competitors? Who are the people that want this? And why do they want it? And how do they communicate? So that when I go to start making my plan, I have a pretty clear idea of what I'm going to do and that my hypothesis is correct. So then we go into the planning stage where I build the strategic roadmap of how I'm going to accomplish the goals and objectives that I've identified through research that my client needs. And part of that planning is the implementation phase because let's face it, when we go to implement anything, it's messy, right? So a good implementation plan has, what deliverables you're going to do, it has deadlines, it has budget, it thinks about what are the Human Resources costs? And what is the accountability? Who's doing what, when, and how are they doing it. So then we implement the plan and we're asking ourselves, okay, and then what happens, and then what happens, and then what happens until we can clearly know that it's going to work the way we want it to. So we implement and then we evaluate all of the key performance metrics that we identified in our research and planning phase, we're going to measure and it could be, we like to think about outputs versus outcomes. So an output could be I'm going to write seven press releases and 16 social media posts, that's an output. An outcome is what do we want those things to do? So a clearly defined plan is going to say, Yeah, okay, you can put out seven press releases, but why are you doing it? And what do you hope to accomplish? Well, I really want to get an interview on this news channel, because it reaches this audience that I'm trying to get. So we really want to say, if I write seven social media posts, how many people are going to engage with my content? And then will that turn into click throughs to my website, so we identified those kinds of key performance metrics to make sure that we're going to hit all of the things that we want to do and so when we're in a evaluation phase, we're going yeah, this is working, this is working and that's not working so much, let's tweak it and see if we can make it work. So the evaluation phase is really important as our campaigns roll around again, or as we go onto new things, we take that learning with us.

Olivia Mooring 08:51

Yeah, full learning process, and you can take what worked and what didn't work and put into other clients campaigns.

Kathie Taylor 08:59

Absolutely, because we know certain things will work in certain circumstances and that's why that research is so important.

Olivia Mooring 09:06

Definitely. So how did you decide that in In Plain Sight Marketing, that we're going to work with PR and work this way?

Kathie Taylor 09:16

Great question. We didn't always work this way. We had a lot of varied experience coming into forming an agency and in 2017, I had been a member of Public Relations Society of America for quite some time and I decided to earn my accreditation and PR through PRSA. And what that is, is it's a rigorous academic process that through the exam process and all of the other things you show that you have mastery of the knowledge, skills and abilities put forth by PRSA. And, and I learned, I learned so much because as I mentioned before, it's really about process. It's process driven. And so PR gives us that structure around all the things we do and once I got my accreditation, I was like, wow, we have to do this with everything and so we do. So even if we are buying a piece of software for the company, it's an expensive purchase. So we'll do the research on is this the right one? Are there better ones? What can it do for us? And then we'll plan for implementing it and then we'll roll into that implementation process so that, you know, it's seamless and not hairy, because software integrations are scary. And then, you know, we'll evaluate make sure it's still the right tool and that everybody's using it the way they should. And do we need to have more education on it, or training or whatever. So it's really changed how we practice and in that timeframe we've earned, I don't know, countless awards on the types of work that we do, because we stick to this process.

Olivia Mooring 10:58

Awesome. And someone like looking to get into public relations, what would you tell them?

Kathie Taylor 11:03

I would tell them to check out Public Relations Society of America. There are chapters all over the country I belong to the Sierra Nevada chapter here in the Reno Tahoe area. And you can learn more at prsa.org on accreditation, and how to continue to learn, it's a lifetime learning process and I absolutely love it. People come in from all different places. I have a mentor who was, he was a news anchor for I don't know, 20 years, and he decided, I'm not going to do this anymore, I'm gonna go into state work. He ended up being the state public information officer in Oregon for the Oregon Department of Transportation and he got into his role and he's like, I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know anything about PR, what is wrong with me? Why am I doing this? And so he went to PRSA and they took them took him under their wing, and he went through the accreditation process and now he's acting as a mentor to all kinds of PR practitioners. So yeah, so you have to have five years of experience in PR or a related field like news to start the accreditation process. But I would start with just going to workshops and webinars and all of the things you can get.

Olivia Mooring 12:13

Definitely. So it seems like you have a ton of experience and I appreciate you sharing all your public relations knowledge with us, Kathie, thanks so much for coming on today.

Kathie Taylor 12:23

Oh, thanks for having me, Olivia.

RP 12:28

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