



10 SECRETS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN HEALTHCARE

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WHO ARE WE

Creative Broadcast Networks Limited (CBNet) is a Nigerian PR agency specializing in public relations and communication management services in the health sector. Founded in 2010, the agency has grown to become one of the leading public relations and communications firms in Nigeria.

CBNet focuses on providing strategic communication solutions that help clients build and protect their brands and reputations in a rapidly changing healthcare environment. The agency works with a wide range of clients including healthcare providers, medical professionals, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, healthcare organizations, and health insurers.

CBNet prides itself on providing quality communication services that are tailored to meet the needs of its clients. The agency has a team of highly qualified and experienced professionals who are committed to delivering outstanding results for their clients. CBNet also provides a range of services such as media relations, content creation, crisis communication, event management, digital marketing and social media management.

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INTRODUCTION

The field of healthcare public relations is constantly evolving, with new challenges and opportunities emerging every day. In this book, we will explore the top 10 secrets for success in healthcare PR.

Whether you are a seasoned pro or new to the industry, you will find valuable insights and practical strategies for effectively communicating with the public, media, and other key stakeholders.

We will examine the latest trends and best practices in the field, and provide case studies and expert insights on how to navigate the complexities of healthcare PR. With the right approach and the right tools, you can drive success for your organization and make a positive impact on the lives of your patients.

Public relation is an essential component of the integrated marketing mix. Many business owners make the mistake of focusing on traditional marketing while ignoring the many benefits an effective public relations campaign could offer them.

Effective healthcare public relation is crucial for building and maintaining a positive reputation for healthcare organizations. These ten secrets can help your organization achieve success in this area:

Chapter 1

CLEARLY DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND TAILOR YOUR MESSAGING TO THEM.

Understanding whom you are trying to reach and what resonates with them will help ensure your PR efforts are successful.

Consider this example; you have been commissioned to carry out a sports betting public relations for a US-based sports betting company. For reasons best known to you, you decide to create articles that will spark readers' imaginations and then decide to share the said article with beauty magazines based in the United Kingdom. How do you think the campaign will end up doing? It will be shambolic! Not only have you not taken the time to understand who your target audience is, but you have also placed your articles in the wrong magazines targeted at the wrong audience!

So, how do you make sure that your healthcare public relations campaign is targetting the right audience and being shared with them where they spend time? You ensure that by clearly defining your target

audience and tailoring your public relations messaging to them. Here's how you go about that.

One of the first ways to ensure that you have a successful healthcare public relations is by clearly defining your target. To do this, you can borrow a leaf from marketers and start by creating something known as a customer avatar or a buyer persona. A buyer persona is a semfictional representation of who your perfect customer is.

How do you find information that will help you create the perfect customer avatar you ask? You should start by having a conversation with management staff. Management staff members such as CEOs, CFOs and CMOs typically have a great idea of the people the business is supposed to serve. However, don't stop there. While management staff may have a firm idea of who the company should be targeting, their ideas could sometimes be impractical, which is why you need to talk to another group of stakeholders to help you understand your ideal target audience members.

Another group of stakeholders that you want to talk to help you get a clearer picture of who your ideal target audience members are is your sales team. Your sales team deals with customers daily and, as such, understand the group of people that you are currently attracting to your business. After getting these clarifications, you should be able to create a pretty reliable customer avatar.

Some of the information you want to particularly consider when creating a customer avatar includes their age range, level of education, pain points and more importantly the platforms where they typically spend time. Why are these details important? They will help you know which platforms to consider for your public relations campaign, and more importantly, they will guide you in terms of the marketing communication you want to share with them.

Chapter 2

ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY INFLUENCERS AND MEDIA OUTLETS.

Building relationships with key influencers and media outlets can help increase the reach and impact of your PR efforts. Use data and research to support your messaging and make a strong case. Providing data and research to back up your messaging will make it more credible and compelling.

A key ingredient of running successful public relations campaigns is that you have to build relationships in the industry to be able to get media mentions. I will use my personal experience to illustrate this point.

Many a time, I have had to work with organizations who do not have substantial public relations budgets, and to make matters worse, these organizations were not open to having their stories labelled as "sponsored posts", so, I have had to depend on my relationships with editors and journalists to help get a worthy press mention in such cases. As humans, we are more disposed to do a favour for a friend or acquaintance than for someone whom we don't know. It is why you will

go overboard to help your siblings get something done, and in the same breath, not really care when a stranger asks you for the same help.

I know what you are thinking; how do you get to build relationships with some of the most prominent editors and journalists in your preferred niche? The answer is that you do it the same way you build relationships in other spheres of life, by painstakingly getting them to know, like and trust you. There are a lot of events and locations where journalists hang out all the time. You want to start networking from there and find people you are compatible with to start building relationships with. As you continue to know each other better and continue to build your relationship together, they will begin to like and trust you better and naturally, be more open to doing you small favours here and there,

Chapter 3

STAY UP TO DATE ON INDUSTRY TRENDS AND NEWS.

Keeping abreast of industry trends and news will help you stay relevant and be prepared to respond to developments as they happen.

Have you tuned into a news channel where a topical issue is being discussed? What you notice very quickly is that people whom the news anchors invite on to the show are people they perceive to be an authority in their field. Therefore, branding yourself as an authority in the healthcare profession will help position you for those types of opportunities.

Being an authority in your endeavour will ensure that journalists and influencers always reach out to you for your opinion. The best way to become an authority in your field is by keeping abreast of industry trends and news and being ahead of these happenings. In the same breath, building a personal brand also helps present you as an

authority, and that will in turn keep you in the news as breaking news and trends happen in the industry.

How Do You Build A Personal Brand?

There are a number of ways you can build a personal brand that will position you an authority in your field, but here are some of the best ways that i have had experience with:

Blog

To help build your personal brand, you could consider making a professional website where you simply share thoughts about happenings in your industry, Alternatively, you consider creating a quick account on a platform like [Medium](#) where you can post your blogs. Blogs will typically help you get seen on search engines while helping boost your authority. Need help with what to write about? Consider sharing your point of view on industry trends and news.

Post on your LinkedIn and other social media platforms

Linkedin is a haven for people who want to build their personal brand and, consequently their authority. That's because the platform is one that allows you to build a personal brand. Everyone that you are connected to on LinkedIn is one professional or the other. Therefore, you can build a personal brand on LinkedIn better than on any other platform. To start building your brand, just start posting about news and trends in your industry, and also make sure to engage with people who engage your posts. With a little bit of consistency, you should be able to garner interest, and build a personal brand.

Posting on LinkedIn should not stop you from posting on other platforms. As I stated earlier, LinkedIn is the best platform for building a

personal brand, but that doesn't mean other platforms should be ignored. We will delve further into social media posting a little later, so keep your eyes peeled for all the juicy details.

Do guest blogging

According to Hubspot, Guest blogging is a content marketing tactic that involves writing and publishing one or more articles for other websites. It is basically something that people and businesses do in order to get more brand visibility and also to build brand authority. To start guest blogging, identify top websites that typically accept guest posts, then find a topic that nobody has written on for the same website, then write! After writing your guest blog, reach out to the platform and get your post published.

Aside from the benefits mentioned earlier, guest blogging also gives you social proof. According to Shopify, social proof in business is confirmation that other people have bought and found value in your product or service. When people can do a Google search and see your work on your blog and other websites, they'd generally assume that you are a person of value.

Think about local SEO

Local SEO is one thing people overlook when trying to create a personal brand. You can start your local SEO today by creating a Google My Business profile. Here is how to do it according to Google:

- On your computer, sign in to your Google Account, or create one.

- If you create a new Google Account, sign up with your business email domain.
- Go to [create a profile](#).
- Enter the name of your business. You may also be able to select your business from the list of suggested businesses as you type.
- If you get a message that someone else has already verified the business, request ownership of the Business Profile.
- Search for your business category.
- Click Next.
- Choose whether you have a location customers can visit.
- For businesses with a storefront staffed during business hours: Click Yes.
- You may be asked to enter your business address or position a marker on a map for the location of your businesses. When finished, click Next.
- For businesses that don't have a storefront staffed during business hours: Click No.
- Enter the service area of your business.
- You can set your service area based on the cities, postal codes, or other areas that you serve. You can add up to 20 service areas.
- Tip: We recommend you do not extend the boundaries of your overall area farther than 2 hours driving time from where your business is based. For some businesses, it may be appropriate to have a larger service area.
- Enter a phone number and website URL.
- Click Next.
- You also have the option to create a website based on your information.
- Click Finish.

Note: You can create a profile as a business consultant with a focus on your niche. With that profile, if journalists or influencers are looking for experts within your niche, they'd be able to find you.

Chapter 4

USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO YOUR ADVANTAGE AND ENGAGE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.

Social media provides an opportunity to connect with your audience and share your message in a more informal setting.

Social media is a great tool to use for your healthcare public relations activities. By its core nature, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow you to directly interact with your prospective customers and customers alike, helping you eliminate the bureaucracy of having to go through the press. Therefore, it is an amazing tool in your public relations arsenal. However, it makes no sense to just post sporadically on social media without having a plan to engage with your fans properly. Here are some steps you should take to use social media as a public relations tool for your healthcare business:

Create a Content Calendar

The best way to use social media as a social media tool is to make sure that you have a clear understanding of who your target audience is and the type of content that you want to share with them. A great way to achieve that is by creating a content calendar. A content calendar helps you plan the content you want to share with your target audience over a period of time. After creating your content calendar, you can use a social media scheduling software like [Hubspot](#) to schedule your posts and when you want them to go out.

Build A Strategy For The Different Channels

A huge mistake that many brands make when posting content on social media is that they share the same content across all social media platforms. That's akin to creating a content for radio, then looking to share the exact same piece of content across television, radio and print- it is basically impossible. To succeed on social media, you would have to look at the different social media channels as exactly- different media platforms. Invest time and money into trying to understand the kind of content that works specifically on a given social media channel, then make sure you customize content for the various social media channels.

Tailor Your Message To Your Audience

We have touched on this point before, but I feel there's a need to reiterate it here. It would be best if you took the time to ensure that your messages are tailored to your target audience. For example, the language and tone you use to communicate with females between the ages of 18-24 will be significantly different from the language and tone you use when communicating with adult males aged 44-55. Try to

understand your audience, then create tailored messages that appeal to them.

Build a Relationship With the Press On Social Media

Another exciting way you can use social media is by connecting with journalists on social media to help boost your chances of getting a media mention! I recommend you open a Twitter account and interact with journalists who interest you there. Send them a direct message on there to build a relationship, then pitch your organization to them to stand a chance of being mentioned!

Monitor Your Brand Mentions

A great thing you can do on social media is monitoring your brand mentions on and off social media platforms. With Google Alerts, for example, you can get notified whenever your brand name is mentioned on websites online. With social media management tools like Hubspot, you can also get notified when your brand name is mentioned on social media without minding if you were tagged. This is a fantastic way to take stock of what is being said about you online and manage it.

Chapter 5

BE PROACTIVE IN SEEKING OUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEDIA COVERAGE.

Don't wait for media outlets to come to you - actively seek out opportunities to share your message through interviews, press releases, and other media channels.

Being proactive typically entails producing engaging material, disseminating it to the public (for instance, via press releases, media pitches, and social media), and "seeking" journalists to cover your story. In that sense, here's how to execute PR outreach effectively.

Being engaging, generating some buzz about your company, and becoming "findable" are the key factors to attracting media attention in this technique. After all, journalists use Google Search and social media to search for relevant information, just like the remainder of us do. For instance, according to research by the broadcast advertising agency ON-Broadcast, a lot of journalists admit to researching articles on social media or other websites.

Original research, expert commentary, infographics that are appealing to the eye, and newsworthy articles are some of the content types that will typically attract coverage by journalists.

You can easily create press releases and publish them in a dedicated newsroom using some media relations tools, as well as find relevant media contacts and send email pitches to begin gaining attention from the media.

One of the best tools I use to gain international press mentions is HARO. If you're not familiar with the acronym HARO, it stands for Help A Reporter Out. It is a popular internet tool for journalists to obtain public comments.

[HARO](#) helps provide journalists with a robust network of sources for prospective stories and, conversely, offers daily possibilities for businesses and individuals to secure lucrative media coverage.

When you sign up on HARO, the platform will send you journalist enquiries about three times a day. The emails you receive will contain questions from journalists on topical issues. If they are asking questions related to your area of healthcare service, for example, you will be able to respond with your thoughts. If the journalist considers your contribution useful, they'd have to mention your name and

business to use it. It is a win-win for both the journalist and the business owner or public relations executive.

Haro is mostly used by reporters looking for subject matter experts to quote in their stories. Still, PR professionals or others may also utilize it for content marketing and backlink building.

The simple pitching procedure enables sources to find subjects relevant to their business without wasting time sourcing.

Chapter 6

PREPARE AND PRACTICE FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS.

Being well-prepared and practised for media interviews will help you present your message effectively and with confidence.

Getting a media interview is a public relations executive's most immense joy. You get the rare opportunity of telling your brand story without the clutter of editorial staff and newsroom policies. As worthwhile as a media interview is, you might ultimately fumble the interview if you don't adequately prepare for it. So the question is, how do you adequately prepare and practise for media interviews? Here are some things to keep in mind:

Preparing For Interviews

You should ask yourself some questions before going for a media interview. These questions will help you prepare for the interview and stay sharp during the media interview process:

What is the purpose of doing this interview?

Asking yourself the purpose of doing the interview will help you understand how to navigate the interview properly. Is the interviewer just trying to get you on a panel so you can share knowledge? Will you be allowed to talk about your business? Understanding the purpose of the interview shows you how to prepare for the interview adequately.

What is the main thing I want to say?

Another thing you should outline is what your main point will be during the media interview process. Getting a main point across is better than going for a media interview and then rambling all over the place without substance.

What information, evidence, or examples do I have that will support the point I want to make?

You also want to make sure that all the points you want to pass across are supported by adequate and succinct evidence to help drive home your point. So, you also want to dedicate enough time to preparing for that.

What questions is the interviewer likely to ask – from easy to difficult – and how will I respond?

Anticipating the questions that an interviewer is likely to ask and then preparing for them is a great skill to hone for your upcoming interviews. You want to look at their previous interviews and understand their question patterns to anticipate the kind of questions they generally ask. Some interviewers will share questions upfront. Most will want to ask you questions on the spot.

Chapter 7

USE STORYTELLING TO MAKE YOUR MESSAGING MORE RELATABLE AND ENGAGING.

Telling stories helps humanize your message and makes it more relatable and memorable.

Think about it. What will you rather prefer? A teacher that comes to class and reels out endless data and statistics, or will you rather have a

teacher that can break down complex subject matter into understandable language while interweaving relatable stories that help hold your attention? Chances are that you will prefer the second teacher and that's not strange. Many people prefer stories to typical lectures. As someone in charge of a healthcare organization's public relations, you want to ensure that you inject enough storytelling into your marketing communications process.

The purpose of storytelling in public relations is to stimulate the listener's imagination. Relatable stories activate more parts of the brain than strictly factual material. In addition, interactive storytelling is often used since it requires attention.

Brand narratives are created via public relations. There is no PR without a plot. This is why we make news where there is none as public relations professionals. Stories offer you something to talk about and market yourself in your field.

PR is done to get the brand published and discovered by many people. Storytelling contributes to marketing communication by ensuring that the primary message is consistent across channels and media platforms. This is why public relations professionals must constantly hone their storytelling skills.

Business storytelling focuses on developing a brand's personality, humanizing techniques and processes, and providing a company with a voice and image. Business stories provide individuality to information that would otherwise be merely a chunk of boring data. Storytelling in business is intended to interest and fascinate an audience so that they remember the brand and, ideally, spread the narrative.

Chapter 8

USE DATA AND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT YOUR MESSAGING AND MAKE A STRONG CASE.

Providing data and research to back up your messaging will make it more credible and compelling.

This might sound counterproductive to my point about injecting storytelling into public relations and the integrated marketing mix, but trust me, both can go together. Remember the example of the professor I gave earlier about a professor who uses data and storytelling to break down complex subject matters into simple everyday language? When creating marketing communications for your healthcare public relations campaigns, you want to be that professor.

Whether you are planning for an interview or making a press release, you want to ensure that you infuse enough storytelling and data to make your stories believable. Consider these two messages for example:

Message 1: The UN says there is a new disease about to break out that will kill many people

Message: The UN has detected a new strain of the COVID-19 virus that the WHO projects will be about 10% deadlier than the omicron.

Which of these two messages will resonate with people better? The second message, of course! While the first message feels like hearsay, the second sounds like something the UN will say, with a statement credited to the WHO. You see, data and research will help give more credence to your story, while storytelling will help keep your audience interested in consuming the content.

According to Moz.com, "If story activates the brain's emotional centres, data activates the logic centres. Activating both simultaneously can be incredibly powerful — if done correctly. For example, if you tell a story about someone your business or product has helped, then combine that story with data that explains how much you've helped them, your story becomes more trustworthy."

Chapter 9

BE RESPONSIVE AND TRANSPARENT IN YOUR COMMUNICATION.

Responding promptly to inquiries and being transparent in your communication will help build trust with your audience.

When you can boost your presence in the marketing space and build your brand, chances are that you will start getting media inquiries. And while media inquiries can be exciting at the beginning of your public relations journey, it might get to a stage where you will get inundated with so many requests that you will be torn between which inquiries to respond to and which ones to ignore. It is advisable not to get lethargic at that point; you want to make sure that you are responsive to all your inquiries, clarifying if you will be available to take their request or not, and if you are turning them down, make sure to be transparent as to why you are doing that. There's a saying that you should be careful about the feet your step on while on your way up, as you may meet them on your way down. The summary is to be very responsive, respectful and transparent in your communication.

On the other hand, while crafting a marketing communication for a healthcare outfit, you also want to ensure that you are communicating clearly, concisely and precisely. Today, customers are more educated than they have ever been, with more options than ever. So, they'd quickly turn on you if you attempted to sell them nonsense. Make sure you communicate clearly and transparently at all times.

Chapter 10:

EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR PR EFFORTS AND ADJUST YOUR STRATEGY AS NEEDED.

Regularly evaluating the success of your PR efforts and adjusting your strategy as needed will help ensure that your PR efforts are practical and aligned with your organization's goals.

Finally, you need to periodically measure the success of your public relations efforts and then adjust as necessary. You want to double down on the working strategies and reduce the effort geared towards approaches that give you the least investment return. Here are some key metrics you want to measure from time to time:

- Sales stats
- Social media reach
- Engagement on social media
- Media impressions
- Brand mentions
- Keyword rankings
- Social shares
- Website Traffic
- Number of Backlinks
- Lead generation

You also want to track the channels that are giving you the best results and those that are not. You could use an analytics tool like Google Analytics to understand where your best results are coming from. You can also use brand mention tools to keep track of your media mentions.