



GET AHEAD WITH FORWARD PLANNING

PR AWARDS, TRAINING & FORWARD FEATURES



Vuelio

MAKE A PLAN

A good plan gives you confidence that you are covering the right bases and frees up your time to work on new projects and campaigns. Plans should always include flexibility so you can be reactive to breaking news, crises and the latest trends.

While we can't predict everything that will happen in the year ahead – for example, Brexit – preparing as much as possible will put you in the strongest position to succeed.

When it comes to forward planning, there's only one place to start: creating your calendar.

A comms calendar is a must for PR and can be used to keep track of internal and external events, campaigns and key dates such as national holidays and industry-specific activities.

There are a number of ways to build a calendar, from spreadsheets to planning software and within specific tools such as Vuelio, which allows you to plan each type of activity.

Good tools allow you to sort tasks by team and project, so your colleagues only have to see the events and tasks that are relevant to them.

Once you've created your calendar, set up reminders and alerts to make sure you're working ahead of deadlines with plenty of time.

WORK WITH EVENTS

There are hundreds of PR and comms events each year, and thousands of general industry events that could be ideal for you and your clients.

Identifying suitable events and adding them to your calendar means you can organise campaigns and attendance ahead of time. It can also remind you to register for tickets early or contact event organisers to discuss sponsorship packages. In both cases, early contact can lead to big savings.

Major PR events this year include the PRCA National Conference and the CIPR National Conference – both of these will be tailored to the industry and cover the issues facing PR professionals in 2019.

The CIPR and PRCA also have sector-specific and regional groups with their own events programmes, which are great for members and non-members alike to learn about specific industry issues and network with like-minded practitioners.

Industry events are also held by a range of industry suppliers,

including Vuelio, as well as publishers, such as PRWeek and PRmoment, who have a range of conferences, exhibitions and seminars that can enrich the PR experience.

Finding industry-specific events can be as easy as typing '[industry name] events' into a search engine. For broader industries, such as finance, try adding the word 'PR' or 'communications', or a geographical location for a more refined search.

ENTER AWARDS

Get your company noticed and your achievements celebrated by entering industry awards. Applying for awards can be time consuming, and it often costs money, so take some time to research the right events rather than trying to enter them all.

Before entering, determine if the awards will impress clients and prospects, or if they will give you an advantage over your competitors. Awards are also a good opportunity to highlight a successful campaign, which, for agencies, brings in more business *and* helps to secure that client's future projects.

In the run up to, and during, awards, you can use social media to build momentum, connect with other finalists and engage with everyone on the night. If you win, you can typically display a digital badge on your website and across header images on social media (and you'll have a physical trophy for the shelf!).

Kari Owers, founder of O PR, told us that younger agencies should also consider entering awards to get noticed in the industry, she said: 'In the early days we found awards very helpful in establishing the agency and recruiting great talent.'

When entering awards, read the brief and criteria carefully. Do you tick all of the boxes and can you provide exactly what the judges are looking for? If you can't follow the guidelines, then you're unlikely to be shortlisted.

Also, check the terms for entering – do you need to buy tickets to the awards ceremony or are you agreeing for your entry to be made available to the public? It's good to communicate these additional details to the rest of the team – especially if the event requires a certain level of participation.

Cathy Hayward, managing director of Magenta Associates, said it is important for PRs to do their research before entering awards: 'There are countless award schemes out there, from small localised events through to nationwide and global ceremonies. Do your research, be realistic and invest time in writing detailed entries – you could be surprised where it takes you.'

2019 PR INDUSTRY AWARDS

PRWeek Best Places To Work

Register from: February

Location: Online (includes a face-to-face judging session)

Info: The Awards now include a comprehensive survey, a telephone interview, and three brand new categories: Reward, Culture and Organisational Health.

PRmoment awards

Held in: April

Location: London and Manchester

Info: Judged by a group of independent judges from senior roles, both in-house and agency side. All shortlisted entries will be provided with feedback.

UK Content Awards

Held in: June

Location: London

Info: The UK Content Awards celebrate excellence in content marketing and rewards creative agencies and in-house teams. Choose from 22 categories.

CIPR Excellence Awards

Held in: June

Location: London

About: There are 31 categories from small budget campaign and public sector campaign to best practitioner and outstanding consultancies. Top shortlisted entries also receive feedback.

PRCA DARE awards

Held in: June - July

Location: split into six regions – Midlands, Northern Ireland, The North, Scotland, South East & East Anglia, South West & Wales

Info: The PRCA DARE Awards reward the best PR and communications professionals across the UK, decided by a panel of highly respected industry experts across each region.

Media Week Awards

Held in: October

Location: London

Info: Championing business impact and innovation in the commercial media industry.

PRWeek Awards

Held in: October

Location: London

Info: Top judges from across the industry select campaigns and people that have shaped PR throughout 2019.

CIPR PRide Awards

Held in: October - December

Location: UK-wide across nine locations including Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North West.

Info: The CIPR PRide Awards recognise the outstanding work of in-house and agency teams across the UK.

Vuelio Blog Awards

Held in: November

Location: London

Info: The biggest and best event celebrating the greatest bloggers and influencers in the UK. From fashion and beauty to politics and parenting, this event is a unique opportunity to mix and mingle with the industry's elite at the most influential awards ceremony of the year. But we would say that.

CREATE AWARD-WINNING CAMPAIGNS

Having a popular campaign doesn't necessarily mean it will be award-winning. The campaigns that win the most prizes meet their objectives and have the evidence to prove it. Here are five top tips for creating award-winning – and therefore excellent – campaigns from industry experts.

1. Think about why

Gini Dietrich, founder of Arment Dietrich and author of *Spin Sucks*, [suggests](#) you should start with the why: 'Why are you crafting this PR campaign? Why are you deploying these specific strategies? Why will anyone care about this PR campaign?'

2. Come up with a strategy

Frank Marr, co-founder of AM+A, [told us](#) about the importance of creating a campaign strategy before you begin: 'It's vital to have a clear outline of how a creative idea can be brought to life. You should always start with a timeline of asset creation, media communication and which platforms you need.'

3. Take risks

James Herring, co-founder of Taylor Herring, [believes](#) campaigns that come from the heart rather than the head are the ones that win awards.

James said: 'Create a work culture that thrives on bold and brave ideas to solve client problems. With no risk, there's no reward. This only comes by having client partners that are prepared to do things differently and take a few calculated risks.'

4. Make your entry interesting

Mandy Sharp [looks](#) at award entries from the perspective of a judge: 'Make your entries interesting to read. You have got to make them engaging because, as a judge you read hundreds of entries. You need to explain the insight and reasoning behind the campaign and explain the background of why you did it. You need to do something interesting and creative, and, of course, share some results.'

5. Always include evidence

Tricia Ward, founder of TW Communications, [says](#) you should be clear why your submission deserves to win based on the facts and measurement of impact: 'You need to show factual evidence of why you are fabulous and the judges will know you are without having to spell it out!'

USE FORWARD FEATURES

Forward features are the editorial calendars created by publications to plan their content throughout the year. They are usually presented as a list of topics including brief descriptions, submission deadlines and dates of publication.

Forward features give you a glimpse into the types of topics your key media outlets are going to be covering in the upcoming year. If you can meet the requirements of forward features, it can be a quick and easy route to coverage in your target publications.

Be specific

The Vuelio Media Database allows you to find upcoming features by keyword but broad terms such as 'IT' or 'technology' can be applicable to a number of different industries. Work out what unique keywords match your aims, and identify and remove irrelevant categories from your search.

Research the relevance of media outlets

You can further refine your results by taking a closer look at the media outlets each forward feature comes from. Profile information allows you to get a better idea of how a media outlet may be appropriate to your brand and campaign. Target only those outlets that are consistent with your campaign's objectives.

Prioritise the list

You may be surprised at how many relevant opportunities you find, particularly in the B2B sector. By identifying the opportunities that have the most worth to your campaign and making these a priority, you will be able to manage your leads more effectively.

Diarise the opportunities

Journalists are often working to strict deadlines. We give the same advice for PRs receiving enquiries through the Journalist Enquiry Service – making sure that you have the right information for the right journalist at the right time can be the difference between getting coverage and missing out. Take note when planning your campaign – deadline dates could be months before the issue date.

Pitch your idea well in advance

Forward features will often have a named contact that is responsible for the editorial. You can increase your chances of coverage by contacting them ahead of time to find out more about the feature and how you can contribute. It also presents you with the opportunity of pitching an idea or viewpoint for the feature they may not have considered.

TRAINING

Training and professional development keeps you informed and up-to-date with changes in the industry. There are a number of ways to develop within PR, including attending training events and conferences, and listening to webinars.

Matt Silver, senior account manager at Ketchum, advocates the importance of training for staying at the top of your field. He said: 'Investing in continuing professional development is crucial. In the current climate, the moment you stop learning, is the moment you start becoming irrelevant. My view is that a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development is paramount for anyone who wants to be a top rate communications counsellor.'

The professional bodies CIPR and PRCA run regular training courses, and sites like PR Academy recommend reputable courses and can help you spot the best ones for your needs.

CIPR President Emma Leech said: 'If there's one thing the public relations industry is accustomed to its change. Our practice is constantly evolving, and PR professionals cannot afford to stand still. Training equips practitioners with the knowledge and confidence to deliver value for clients and organisations. PR is a strategic management function and currency is essential for

us to operate at the top of our game. Fundamentally, quality PR training keeps your skills sharp and helps you stay on top of emerging trends.

'Last year the CIPR trained around 2,000 PR professionals and demand for PR training shows no sign of slowing. The most popular courses over the last 12 months were Change Communication, Strategic Internal Comms and Introduction to PR.

'Training might be desirable in other industries, but for ours it's essential. There are no barriers to entry in public relations. Anyone with a phone and access to the internet can call themselves a PR person. That makes training and qualifications imperative.

'As Brexit approaches it will be even harder than ever for businesses to recruit top talent. Candidates are likely to adopt a more cautious approach to job hunting this year, which could trigger an even greater demand for training as businesses seek to upskill their existing employees.'

TRAINING WITH THE CIPR AND PRCA

The CIPR trains over 2,000 PR professionals each year and has introduced six new courses to reflect needs across the industry for 2019. They are:

- [Personal branding masterclass](#)
- [Social & digital crisis management](#)
- [Paid media management](#)
- [LinkedIn for PR professionals](#)
- [Introduction to podcasting](#)
- [Introduction to digital photography](#)

You can view the whole CIPR training brochure for 2019 [here](#).

The PRCA runs over 100 training sessions for PR professionals looking to build upon their industry skills including writing, digital and media handling, personal skills including leadership, account management, personal branding, client management and finance skills.

Souha Khairallah, the PRCA's talent and professional development director, said: 'Training builds confidence, allowing participants to learn from other attendees and build skills.'

'Training sessions that build personal skills such as presenting, becoming more confident and assertive, and helping women in senior leadership roles to take charge of their careers, are always popular. As is our two-day crisis comms masterclass, which allows participants to take part in a crisis simulation, with a day of theory and a day of practical.'

'PRCA training sessions are very hands-on with practical exercises, giving you the skills and knowledge to take back to the office and implement.'

You can view the PRCA training opportunities [here](#).

You can also find other great courses to boost your knowledge on the [PR Academy website](#).



THE PR INDUSTRY'S MOST POWERFUL DATABASE

GET A DEMO

Over 1 million records

Contacts, influencers, outlets and opportunities

Comprehensive profiles

Our in-house research team works with influencers to create detailed profiles with preferences and even pet peeves

Up-to-date lists

Build lists of the influencers you want to reach and easily target contacts based on sector, interests, topics, location and more

Forward Features

Thousands of searchable editorial opportunities added to every day

Global opportunities

Access contacts and profiles in the UK and around the world

Social influencers

Identify the social influencers who are writing about your topic right now