

CHEAT SHEET: 10 TIPS FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES CMOS TO TURN YOUR PR INTO A PROFIT CENTRE

1. Understand your audience - develop personas and potentially anti-personas

Personas are archetypal representations of your ideal customer or client

Sometimes people who look the same demographically are very different psychographically.

Psychographics help describe attributes such as motivators, pain points, personality, values, opinions, attitudes, interests, and lifestyles.

Consider two men: both born in England in 1948, love dogs, spend holidays in the Alps, plenty of money, second marriages, and have two children. One is Prince Charles and the other Ozzy Osborne. You'll need psychographics, not just demographics, to help you communicate in a way that resonates more deeply with two such different types of people.

Keep an open mind.

Sometimes the real power is not with the person you expect.

One client in a recent project wanted to better understand the audience that bought and used their services. Our persona research revealed that unexpectedly the Operations Manager was a key influencer in the buying process, requiring messaging that focused on operational efficiencies (which our client had never considered) rather than technical industry knowledge that consumes the end users' (and our client's) minds.

2. Address unsolved but real problems your audience face – look for whitespace, help not sell

Your job is to find solutions to your clients' unsolved problems

Try to find the whitespace for your client.

In other words, the intersection of what your clients want to know and your brand's ability to answer those questions.

Why is whitespace important?

Because the news landscape is crowded, and journalists need readers who engage with their content. That's why they won't publish your brand's brochures - but they will publish content which helps them grab the attention of your common audience.

3. Understand the path to purchase and speak to people along it

And speak differently to people at different stages along it

Public relations can be much more than simply building awareness (although that's also important). Taking a more strategic approach, you can use PR to prompt your audience to act or react in the way you would like them to.

What your potential client is likely to do depends on where he/she is along the path to purchase.

Using the personas already developed, understand what questions your prospects will be asking as they move from awareness to purchase decision. Industry commentary might be of most interest to clients just starting to educate themselves about a topic. A new offer, a new price point, a new product will be of interest to clients much closer to making a final purchase decision.

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4. Mix up the format and think multi-media

Established media outlets have recognised that their audience doesn't just necessarily read and are pivoting to other formats.

Video is fast becoming the norm.

Nearly 70% of US publication editors will publish video this year ([Source](#))

Stand-out video relies on quality spokespeople.

You may have a natural talent in-house, but media training can help them hone their skills and stand out from the crowd.

Social media and audio can't be ignored.

Podcasts and other audio-content are a natural fit for a connected world.

80% of Australians are now on social media, so naturally traditional media is integrating social – *The Australian* has a Facebook Messenger bot and was wildly successful with "The Teacher's Pet" podcast series.

Social media is content-hungry, and fresh social media content is a challenge for many publications. Consider how you can help your target publications. Tip: Infographics and charts are low hanging fruit given their share-ability on social.

Podcasts are growing rapidly – they may have been around for a while but voice-driven technology (Google Home, Amazon Echo) means podcasts and other audio content is a natural fit.

5. Integrate your communication strategy

With finite resources, time and budget need to be spent across channels and media in a way that delivers maximum ROI. *That means ensuring your messages are where your clients are going to see them.*

Traditional media is still rated very highly (and trust is growing post the 'fake news' fiasco), but it isn't necessarily the biggest influence on buying decisions.

Example: A recent project we undertook revealed that recommendations from a buyer's network played a much larger role in their buying decision than anything else.

6. Be paid, earned and owned agnostic

Traditional media is a highly competitive environment, with fewer journalists writing for fewer publications.

Directing your budget to the right paid, owned or earned channel will ensure your message reaches your audience, regardless of the media landscape.

Be aware that some of what you think is interesting about your products/ services is simply not newsworthy – so paid channels are likely the best avenue available for amplifying that content.

In all channels, it's important to tell a good story.

Humans are wired for story so if you tell a good story you are more likely to get earned coverage, more likely to get engagement with sponsored content, and more likely to have others share your content.

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7. SEO, keywords and backlinks help your brand become discoverable

Your website should be working 24/7 – it's the cornerstone of your online presence and the hub for all your content.

However, PR is still a powerful tool because your website is not the hub of your prospect's digital world. More likely your audience is spending time on media sites and social media.

Media articles, comparison sites and forums rather than your website are more likely to be suggested by Google as a source of information when a client is in problem-solving mode.

Identify keywords/phrases your prospects typically use – then include these in your PR to increase the chance of being discovered via those media, forum and comparison websites which probably rank higher in search engine results than your own website.

8. Grab attention rapidly – newsjacking, have an opinion, leverage influencers

In a world of information overload, have an opinion, newsjack and leverage your influencers.

Be brave – have an opinion. There's a fine and useful line to step up to in terms of being interesting to journalists and polarising the audience such that your ideal client opts in and your anti-persona opts out

Comment and interact with influencers including media on social

Watch BlueChip's recent webinar – "[Seven steps to leverage the hell out of other people's financial news](#)" to learn more.

9. Be available to journos AND online

Be available, don't waste online traffic.

Success in media relations relies on your ability to be helpful, available and informed – it's that simple.

Journalists are on deadline. They don't have time to track you down. Help them by being available, and by providing a media centre on your website where they can access boilerplate descriptions, high resolution photos, as well previous media releases and coverage.

It's hard to engage meaningfully with clients, and harder still to obtain their email addresses. When driving traffic to your website via PR, consider a call to action that invites that audience to join your email list. In terms of gated content, we have had success with webinars, special events, research reports – something your ideal customer will think is worth having in exchange for their email address.

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10. Measure, track, evaluate and iterate

Ask yourself the obvious question before you begin – what does success look like? Is it website traffic or reach, or in the case of a crisis, no coverage at all!

Your first set of metrics should ladder to your business goals. Reach is only valuable if it brings you something – which could be as simple as brand awareness, so that your sales team have a warmer response to their cold calls, or it could be new subscribers to your content.

Set up a dashboard to measure leading indicators, those that will indicate if your integrated PR is working sufficiently to contribute to business success.

The PRIA measurement framework includes outputs (e.g. a media release), outcomes (e.g. 1 million people reached) and impact (e.g. 50 new subscribers/ inbound calls/ sales meetings agreed).

Use your dashboard to learn what works and what doesn't. Those insights will ensure next year's activities will be even more successful.

**Need help getting the most from
your communication budget?**

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