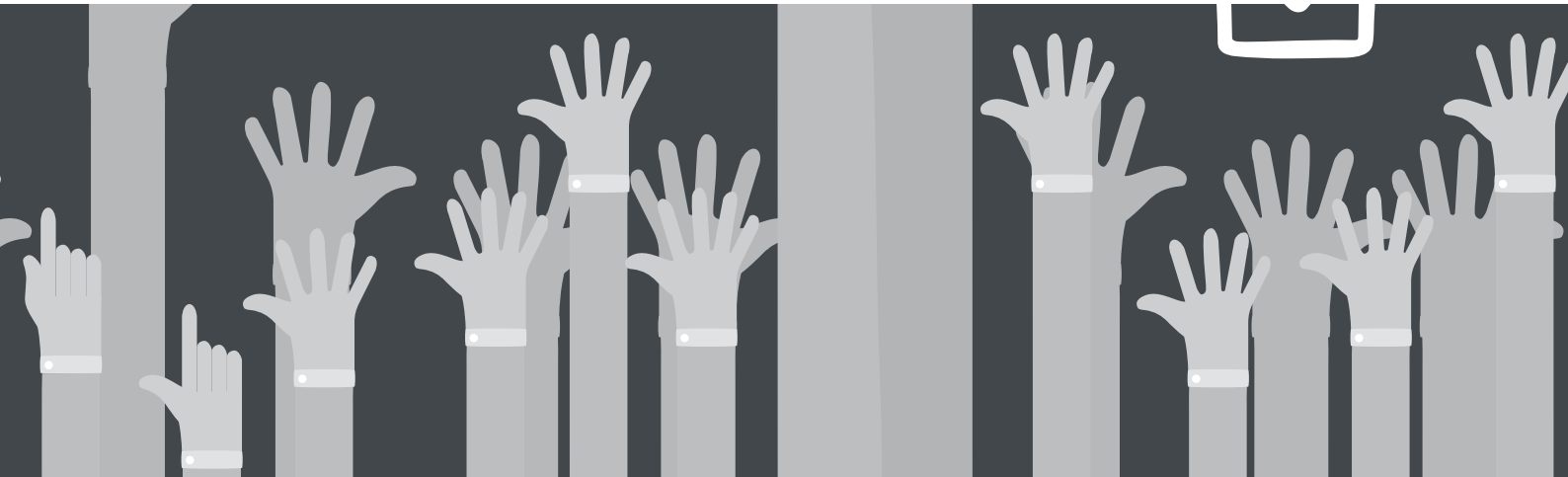
B2B Marketing™



BENCHMARKING REPORT

PR Agencies 2015

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Introduction

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Anyone with even a passing interest in the world of communications will be aware that the goal posts have been moved more than a little in the last five or ten years.

The tried and trusted has been replaced with new ways of working and a whole raft of new challenges and opportunities have served to transform marketing, PR and publishing to the extent that very few people are now still confident that they can describe exactly where one turns into the other.

Digitisation – both in terms of the technologies and techniques now available to businesses and business buyers, and the solutions such shifts have spawned – is at the heart of this change.

B2B Marketing has examined these issues from a wide variety of marketing viewpoints over the years but relatively rarely from the point of view of those working in the increasingly closely aligned world of PR. Our inaugural B2B PR Agencies Benchmarking Report is our attempt to address this shortcoming.

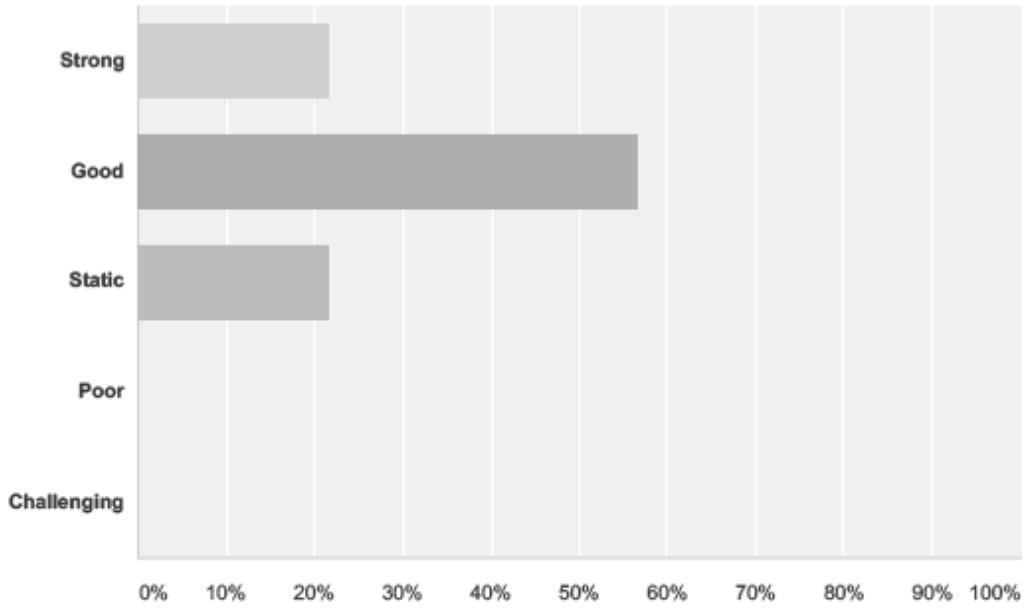
Within these pages you'll find a comprehensive analysis of the B2B PR landscape, drawing on the feedback we received from the PR agencies taking part in this year's survey. We've also provided agencies with the opportunity to share their thoughts on the issues close to their hearts at present, and – of course – there's the PR agency league table 2015.

It's our intention to re-visit this report each year, and we hope you find it as useful and interesting to read as we did to put together.

Current trends in PR agency activity

1

FIGURE 1: The mood of the market



Question: How would you describe the current state of the market?

Having ridden out the choppy waters of recession, it's hugely encouraging to see that those working in the B2B PR industry are corroborating reports of wider economic recovery.

Seventy-eight per cent of our respondent organisations reported that they would describe the state of the market as being either 'strong' (22 per cent) or 'good' (56 per cent). The remaining 22 per cent reported that the market was currently 'static'.

Such sentiments can only encourage optimistic forecasting for the financial year ahead. It will be interesting to track how responses to this question will change over the coming 12 months.

TABLE 1: Challenges

	Major challenges	Challenges	Not a problem
Staff retention	0.00%	17.39%	82.61%
Attracting talent	23.81%	61.90%	14.29%
Pressure on client budgets	17.39%	52.17%	30.43%
Embracing technology	0.00%	26.09%	73.91%
The speed of industry change	0.00%	30.43%	69.57%
Procurement departments	4.35%	47.83%	47.83%
Time lost pitching for work	13.04%	65.22%	21.74%
Measuring/proving ROI	8.70%	60.87%	30.43%

Question: To what extent are you struggling with the following at present?

Respondents were asked to state whether their organisation was struggling with a series of potential business challenges; they could state whether each was a 'major challenge', a 'challenge' or 'not a problem'.

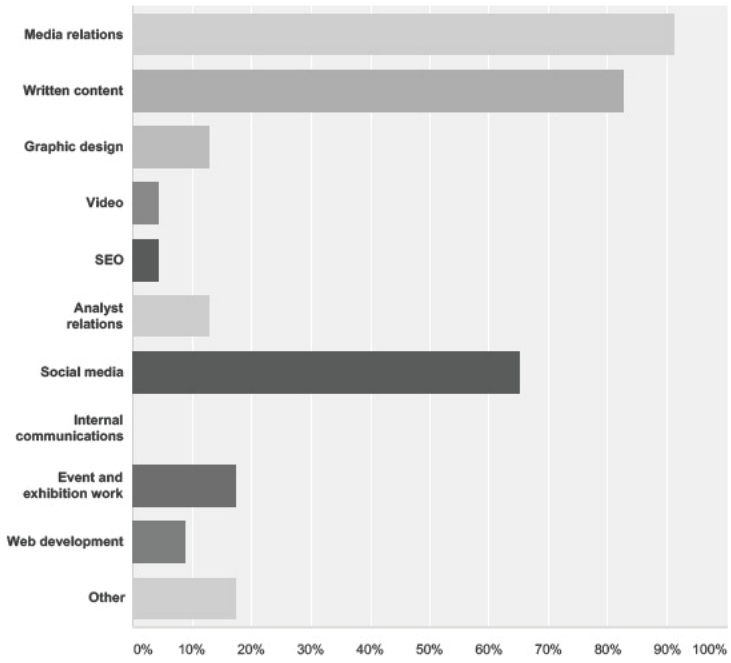
The scenario flagged as being a 'major challenge' by the largest percentage (24 per cent) of respondents was 'attracting talent'.

A further 62 per cent also flagged it as being a 'challenge,' meaning 86 per cent of B2B PR firms are currently facing issues around attracting talented professionals to their organisations. This may be indicative of the changing requirements placed on organisations thanks to wider societal forces such as digitisation, but it can also be seen as being the downside of the upturn. Employees are no longer simply happy to have a job; the best candidates are eager to secure maximum returns for their efforts.

It is notable also that 78 per cent reported that 'time lost pitching for work' was either a 'challenge' or a 'major challenge'. This is a constant gripe for those working in agencies: pitches are time consuming, expensive and not guaranteed to deliver a return. But, they continue to be valued by clients, and are unlikely to be disappearing any time soon.

At the other end of the spectrum, our respondents were far less concerned about factors such as 'staff retention', 'embracing technology' and the 'speed of industry change'. These options were flagged as being 'not a problem' for 83, 74 and 70 per cent, respectively.

FIGURE 2: Services



Question: Which three of the following services generate most income for your agency?

We can rest easy knowing that B2B PR agencies are focusing their efforts in the right areas. According to our respondents, the correlation between the services that deliver the most revenue and the services to which they devote most of their focus is very strong. It's certainly fair to say that the average organisation would struggle to claim such levels of efficiency.

When asked to state which three services generated most income for their organisation, three options were very regularly selected.

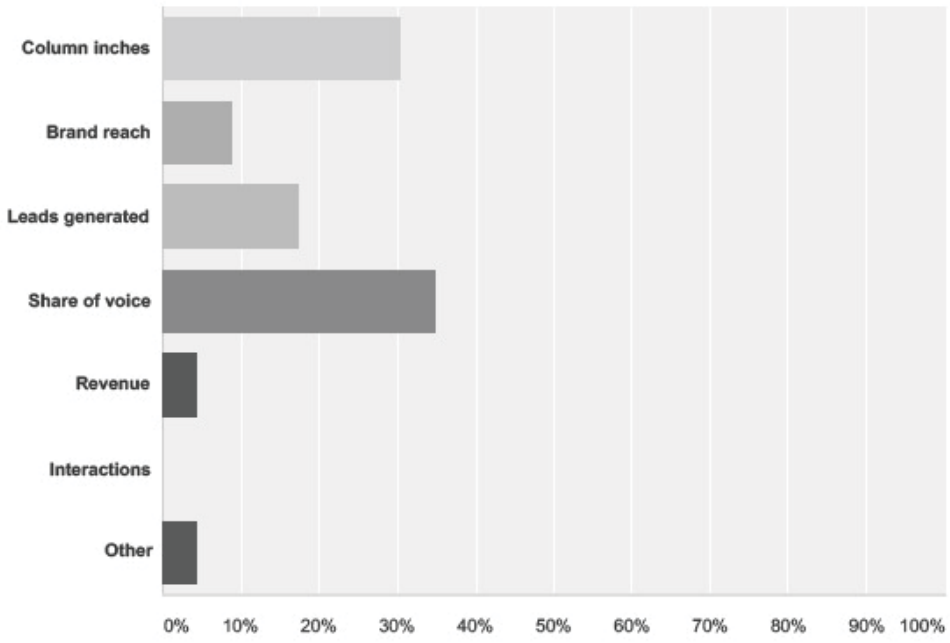
'Media relations' was selected as a top-three revenue generator by 91 per cent, the creation of 'written content' by 83 per cent and 'social media' by 65 per cent.

To highlight the efficiencies in place in our respondent organisations, when the question switched to reflect where company efforts were being focused, the same three areas received similarly notable attention, with 'media relations' flagged as a top-three focus for 91 per cent, 'written content' for 78 per cent and social media by 70 per cent. It's also worth flagging that 'analyst relations' was flagged as a top-three focus by a sizeable 22 per cent but that it was only currently a top-three revenue generator for 13 per cent. This is likely to be an area PR companies focus on more in coming years. There is a broad fit here with changes in the buyer landscape.

In a bid to chart recent changes in PR workload we also asked respondents to report on which activities they were doing more of now compared to five years ago. Significant attention was given to 'social media', which was unsurprisingly selected by 96 per cent, 'video' (61 per cent), 'written content' (52 per cent), 'SEO' (39 per cent) and 'analyst relations' and 'graphic design' (22 per cent each).

Changes in focus are likely to be reflective of a combination of digitisation, business strategy, client demand and industry change, such as the B2B world's recent obsession with content creation and inbound techniques.

FIGURE 3: Client review and payment



Question: How do your clients most commonly assess the success of the work you produce for them?

The changes reported previously in the focuses and services B2B PR firms are offering are, of course, mirrored in the wider communications landscape. And with the arrival of new techniques and challenges comes the arrival of new objectives and new methods of measurement and of ascertaining comparative levels of success.

An – intentionally – oversimplified vision of how a client would measure the contributions made by their PR partner in the past could place emphasis solely on 'column inches'. And this is still the reality for the 30 per cent of respondents that flagged 'column inches' as being the way in which their clients would most commonly assess the success of their work. But it wasn't the most-selected option.

The more digital-focused 'share of voice' received the most selections, flagged by 35 per cent as their clients' preferred barometer of success. 'Leads generated' was chosen by 17 per cent, and 'brand reach' by nine per cent.

TABLE 2: Payment methods

	On a rolling retainer	On a campaign-by-campaign basis	By results
Your biggest client?	86.96%	13.04%	0.00%
Most of your clients?	91.30%	4.35%	4.35%

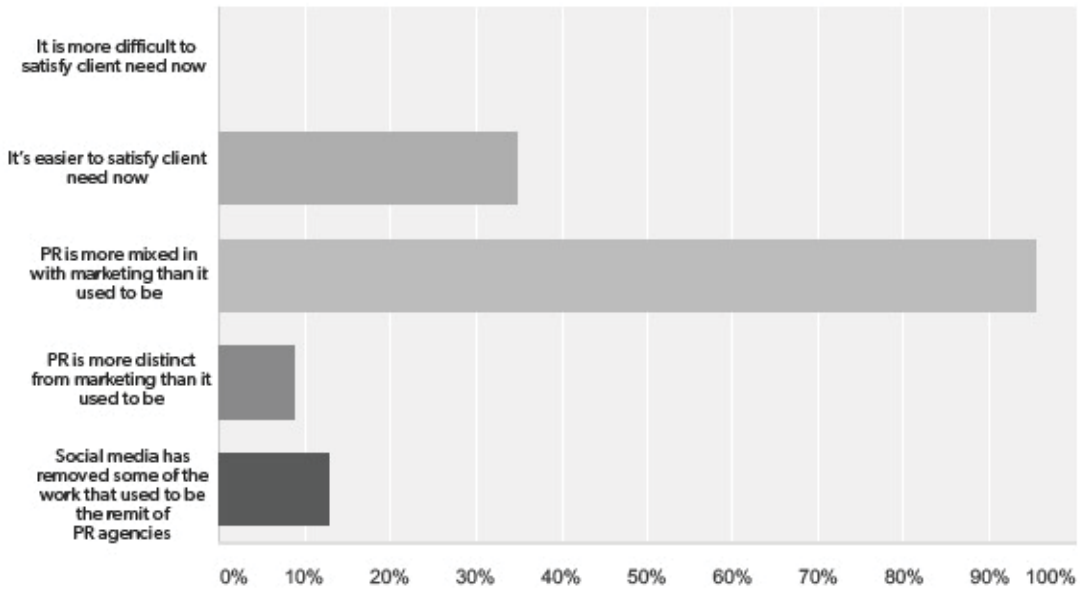
Question: How are you paid by your clients?

Following on from the question looking at key measures for success, we asked respondents to report on how they were being paid by their clients.

This question provided very consistent responses, and highlights that the vast majority of agencies and clients recognise that results are often maximised if working relationships are entered into with an eye on the longer term.

Eighty-seven per cent of our respondents stated that they are paid according to a rolling retainer agreement with their biggest client, and 91 per cent stated that they were paid similarly by 'most' of their clients. Relatively few reported payment on a campaign-to-campaign basis, and only four per cent stated that they were paid according to results by 'most' of their clients.

FIGURE 4: Digitisation and change



Question: What effect has increased digitisation had on PR agencies?

No business operates in a bubble – but there have been few industries to have experienced such rapid change as has been experienced in PR over the last decade. Industry change, brought about mainly through the rapid digitisation of society, has torn up the old rules of engagement and created a raft of new opportunities and challenges.

Not least of these is the effect it has had on the roles played by the different organisations operating in what could broadly be labelled as the communications professions. The previously well-established areas in which PR, marketing, publishing and journalism operated all seem to have merged. And some people are still finding their feet, making land grabs in the name of phrases such as 'storytelling,' 'inbound' and 'demand generation'.

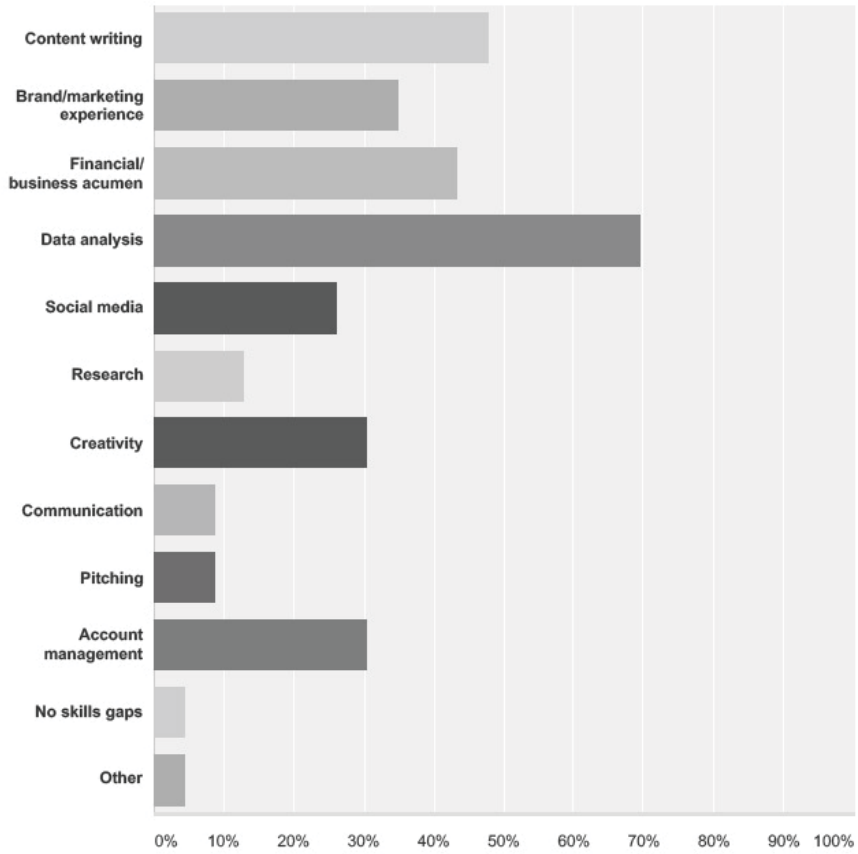
We were eager to understand how these shifting overlaps with related industries have been experienced from a PR viewpoint. Respondents were asked to tick whether they agreed with a series of statements relating to the results of digitisation. And there was widespread agreement in terms of the effects flagged.

The statement that met with most widespread agreement was that 'PR is more mixed in with marketing than it used to be'. This statement was supported by 96 per cent of our respondents.

Meanwhile, 35 per cent agreed that 'it is easier to satisfy client need now.' Encouragingly, no one agreed that digitisation has made it more difficult to satisfy client need.

A follow-up question also served to underline the belief that marketing and PR are overlapping more now than in previous years. When asked to state the degree to which they agreed with the statement 'PR agencies are competing with marketing agencies more now than five years ago,' 74 per cent said they either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed'. Only 13 per cent stated that they disagreed to any extent.

FIGURE 5: Skills and recruitment



Question: What skills gaps do you see most pronouncedly in the PR industry at the moment?

Several factors already flagged in this report – the economic recovery, shifts in the communications landscape, new client focuses and digitisation – have had a significant impact on the people and skill sets B2B PR companies are bringing into the fold. Anyone working in PR these days has to have a diverse skill set, and the demands are increasing all the time. Indeed, it's impossible not to notice the skills gaps appearing.

Chief among them, and a direct result of the incredible advancements seen in technology and data creation is 'data analytics'. This was reported as being a skills gap recognised in the PR industry by 70 per cent of our respondent companies. It's a huge percentage, and – regardless of whether the 30 per cent that didn't recognise it as a gap have data scientists in place or are ignorant of the role data is playing in communications now – it is a gap that cannot be ignored.

Significant holes were also cited as being present in 'content writing,' which was selected by 48 per cent (as well as being flagged as a major revenue stream previously), 'financial and business acumen' (43 per cent) and in 'creativity' and 'account management' (both of which were selected by 30 per cent).

To assess what PR agencies plan to do about these shortcomings, we also asked where they envisaged focusing their recruitment efforts over the coming three years. Respondents were asked to highlight the top three skill sets they would be recruiting, and broadly similar responses were returned, suggesting business leaders are not content to bury their heads in the sand. The most commonly selected responses were: 'content writing' (selected as a top-three recruitment priority by 79 per cent), 'account management' (52 per cent), 'data analysis' (43 per cent) and 'creativity' (39 per cent).

What does the future hold for B2B PR?

Selected quotes from our respondents:

"A major shift into digital as part of consumer engagement and lead generation. Also, much closer alignment and integration with the sales function to support them"

"There has never been a better time to be in B2B PR. There is great scope for agencies to take the lead role in content creation and marketing in all its forms"

"Effective B2B PR will work hand-in-hand with key business departments and leadership teams to deliver content and channel strategies that cut through in a world where customers are struggling to deal with the volume of information. PR success will be measured not by the concept or the big idea but by business impact with PR becoming an integral part of a company's strategy for sustainable growth"

"Growth, but greater blurred lines between marketing, content and PR"

"More intelligent technology leading to greater integration and a more detailed understanding of where customers and prospects are, and how to engage with them"

League table

2

TOP 20 PR B2B agencies

Rank	Agency	GI in £m latest financial year	% of GI from B2B work	GI in £m previous financial year	% year-on-year growth	Headcount	Ranking based on B2B GI
1	Finn Partners	34.5	80%	26.7	29%	450	1
2	Lansons	10.8	62%	8.8	23%	105	2
3	Bite Communications	7.0	46%	6.3	11%	50	5
4	Wyatt International	4.2	90%	4.0	6%	40	4
5	Fifth Ring	4.2	95%	4.0	4%	39	3
6	LEWIS PR	3.4	80%	2.9	15%	59	6
7	Berkeley PR International	3.3	80%	2.9	14%	58	7
8	Tangerine	3.3	43%	3.0	10%	60	13
9	Speed Communications	2.7	43%	2.1	27%	37	15
10	CCgroup	2.3	80%	2.2	8%	27	9
11	Napier Partnership	2.1	100%	1.6	30%	15	8
12	Wildfire	2.1	90%	2.2	-5%	28	10
13	Man Bites Dog	1.6	100%	1.1	39%	29	11
14	Babel PR	1.4	100%	1.2	24%	20	12
15	CIB	1.2	100%	1.2	0%	15	14
16	Technical Publicity	1.1	100%	0.7	53%	16	16
17	Atomic	1.1	65%	1.1	1%	15	18
18	Touchdown PR	1.1	100%	0.8	38%	30	17
19	Ascendant Communications	0.7	100%	0.6	12%	10	19
20	CubanEight	0.6	80%	0.6	2%	10	21
21	4CM	0.5	100%	0.5	3%	9	20
22	Jargon PR	0.5	90%	0.3	46%	9	22
23	The Comms Co	0.4	100%	N/A	N/A	6	23

Agency comment

3

Tell it like it is



NICK BROOKS
MANAGING DIRECTOR
4CM

As an industry, we're great at telling a good story; often weaving a mystical tale of what we do, complete with jargon, acronyms and copious dollops of marketing speak. However, not to put too fine a point on it, more often than not, what we're doing is simply generating a lot of hot air. Indeed, it sometimes seems that much of what is said is either obfuscation or gross elaboration, designed to confuse or impress prospective clients.

Perhaps I shouldn't be surprised. After all, building a good story or spinning an interesting narrative for our clients is what the world of PR expects. It's part of our craft; our profession. Yet when it comes to working with a client, it's the last thing they want to hear. This is especially true for the industrial sector, where plain speaking entrepreneurs, engineers and scientists expect clear and concise thinking, straightforward messages and carefully calculated budgets.

There's little room for ambiguity, never mind woolly ideas padded with empty rhetoric.

So for those of us working in the industrial sector, we need to be able to tell it like it is – to talk straight; and for years the specialised industrial PR agencies have been good at this. However, in this world of multiple on and offline channels, and with the emergence of new and affordable methods of digital communication – both direct and indirect – we need to take a fresh approach. And this should be one that truly integrates PR with other marketing disciplines, allowing the materials created as part of a PR campaign to be easily repurposed and disseminated across every possible channel.

A key factor is emotional engagement. This has become a hot topic of late, and it's just as relevant in the industrial marketplace as it is in the consumer sector. The challenge, though, is getting clients to buy in to what can appear as a soft form of promotion; to think beyond hard facts and data in a world that is full of cogs and gears, pressure and flow, output and productivity.

To a degree, we've always used some form of emotional engagement. At a simple level this has included customer testimonials, by-lined articles that look at hard and soft aspects of technologies and their impacts, positioning of specialists as thought leaders, plus campaigns that capture the imagination of even the most conservative industrialist.

All too often, however successful, these initiatives have been short-lived and the focus falls back to traditional product sales. Although important, on their own, product sales based solely on features and benefits simply do not work; and in a world of increasing commoditisation, it won't differentiate one manufacturer of widgets from another.

We need to build on the best traditional techniques and integrate them with an approach that appeals to audiences at both an emotional and rational level. For example, use tools such as social media, blogging, video and personalisation to present the human aspect of clients and their businesses, and to trigger emotional responses at an individual level.

PR agencies are in a wonderful position to capitalise on this situation. Unlike many other project-based marketing disciplines it's PR agencies that can develop and maintain a strong and ongoing daily relationship with our clients, giving PR agencies a detailed knowledge of their businesses, markets and customers. Link this knowledge with storytelling and media skills and you have an unrivalled ability to craft and then repurpose powerful, thought-provoking and emotionally engaging messages that succeed in a variety of new and exciting ways across different channels and audiences.

Industrial PR for engineering, science and manufacturing technologies has always been a vibrant, innovative and stimulating place to work. In 2015, with something of a resurgence in traditional print media and the continuing growth and diversification of digital channels, we're in excellent shape to help clients develop strong market and brand profiles, built on creative and emotionally engaging content, that ultimately – and this is key for most industrial businesses – generates sales leads and supports long-term growth.



DAVID MERCER
BUSINESS PRACTICE DIRECTOR
BITE

How to be human

Traditional working patterns have been torn apart by mobility, social media, flexible working, globalisation and millennials in the workplace. We're an always-on generation of workers, and our personal and professional lives have been irreversibly blurred. So why do we, as marketers, still talk and think in terms of B2B and B2C?

B2C communicators are allowed to have fun – they can shock people and make them laugh or cry. They can give things away and work with celebrities. They can play with Vine and selfie sticks and inflate giant Smurfs on Tower Bridge. In B2B we have to create thought leaders.

'Thought leadership'. Say that term a few times. How sinister does it sound? It sits somewhere between 1984 and SPECTRE. Do you in your personal life aim to 'lead thought' among your friends and family? I'm guessing you make friends by listening to people. You find common ground and talk to them about stuff you're both interested in. You share your own concerns and fears so they don't feel alone in worrying about the same things. You inspire them with your hopes and ambitions. You question and even argue, but you support them and help them through tough times. And you make them laugh.

If you hit it off, you tell other people what a great person they are, and they do the same about you. You meet people through each other, and you build a network of like-minded folk with shared interests and values. It's organic, it's natural – it's based on the tenets of human decency. At no point does leading thought come into it. Businesses should be no different. They are ultimately humans, communicating with other humans.

But the Holy Grail for most corporate communicators is to present a flawless public persona. A polished and perfect, infallible and all-knowing representation of their company's brand and its people. A company is no more perfect than its people, and its communications shouldn't pretend to be so.

Communications should embrace human imperfections and our hope, fear, humour, anger, passion, skepticism, empathy and honesty; embrace our desire to question, challenge, debate and argue; embrace our ability to listen, accept, learn and grow. With the personal and professional now blurred, organisations should celebrate the very things that make them human. Only human communications will give you a truly differentiated voice.

Business leaders are starting to recognise this. In the search for all-important authenticity, CEOs are eager to flex their self-awareness and show occasional vulnerability. Richard Branson has been doing it for years, but why should he have all the fun? There's barely a handful of FTSE 100 CEOs on Twitter, communicating directly to customers, stakeholders, employees and friends in a relaxed and fundamentally human way.

Forget B2B, we are people talking to people. We need to create emotionally engaging communications that resonate on a personal as well as professional level. We can start by breaking down corporate barriers between leadership teams and the public. Board members are seldom shrinking violets or aching bores. We need to capitalise on their charisma to inject life into our communications, rather than media train the personality out of them.

We need to fundamentally rethink how we build corporate messages so that they are a lot less, well, corporate. And when it comes to content – we need to take fun more seriously. That doesn't mean starting from scratch. Most organisations, large or small, are already churning out a wealth of content – some of it bland, some of it brilliant.

There's no reason that communications targeting businesspeople can't be personally exciting and professionally relevant at the same time. So let's all have a bit more fun. Inject a bit more personality. Be a bit more human.

Looking for business success? Open up and let your PR agency in

SIAN GASKELL
MANAGING DIRECTOR
CUBANEIGHT



Many businesses are familiar with the enormous amount of energy, research and resource that goes into selecting the right PR agency. The right result is paramount, and in today's business environment a PR campaign needs to support a business' objectives and demonstrate real results. But, as a client, how do you ensure that the big promises and creative ideas in a pitch translate into you achieving business success?

According to a recent study by The Agency Management Institute into the attitudes of CMOs and business owners, almost a third (29 per cent) of respondents said agencies are a critical partner for business success. So how do you achieve that partnership status? Having worked in all types of PR agencies, the common denominator for successful client-agency relationships has always been where there has been a willingness for the client to 'let you in'. This is where the business shares the real challenges they are facing and the agency listens and interprets those needs.

One client in the manufacturing space said they wanted to raise their profile to help aid recruitment. We created a plan targeting local and regional media. We pushed out 'good news' stories positioning the business as a great place to work. As a result this has significantly impacted the incoming recruitment enquiries to the business from the local area, as well as raising the profile of the business.

Getting to this point may not come easily or immediately. A client-agency relationship may start off with the usual: media coverage and news announcements. However, it is not until the agency starts to ask questions, to find out the short- and long-term goals of the business and generate trust from the client that you actually get to the nub of what it is that the client is trying to achieve.

From my perspective, the client-agency relationships with most longevity are those where we have worked closely with marketing teams, who share their plans beyond PR so that we can support the bigger picture. They understand the value of an agency and we become a real extension of their team. This openness leads to a shared understanding of the overall objectives and PR can be integrated to maximise other sales and marketing initiatives.

One client wanted to break into the public sector and were exhibiting at a key trade show. We took advantage of their presence at the show and undertook some delegate research on the first day; overnight we created sector specific news that resonated well with that sector audience and trade media. Marketing teams may often be stretched in terms of budget and resources and we take the approach of making content, events and news work as hard as possible.

Another useful channel is having a direct line to the CEO. From past experience, working with businesses whose CEO understands the importance of PR and marketing definitely pays off; they want to be involved (to a degree) in understanding the campaigns, what the bigger picture is, providing useful input and making themselves available as and when needed.

When we went to see one client, the pitch was with the marketing manager and the CEO. They are a fast-growing business, but this was their first foray into using a PR agency. For us, it was about finding out what their marketing plans were, which sectors they were focusing on and delivering results that would help drive traffic to their site and raise awareness of their offering. The CEO has been very accessible when it comes to contributing to the PR campaign and being available to media and this has led to the PR getting off to a flying start. When we analysed their campaign after the first nine months we found a 40 per cent rise in website traffic since the start of the PR campaign and sales figures significantly increased, which was directly attributable to PR activity.

As with all relationships, openness and honesty are always going to stand you in good stead when it comes to building a strong agency-client partnership, working together towards business success.

Many of life's accomplishments are only possible through collaboration

CHANTAL BOWMAN-BOYLES
MANAGING PARTNER, EUROPE
FINN PARTNERS



When Peter Finn started Finn Partners late in 2011, he and his colleagues said the agency would be defined by collaboration.

Collaboration is at the core of our brand, it defines who we are, what we do, energises our commitment to our client partners and to each other and it's helped us achieve some powerful results. But what do we really mean by collaboration – and why should it matter to the people we work with?

The great civilisations of history were created because groups of people banded together to work towards a common goal. Most great achievements in science, medicine, the arts, politics and business are achieved as a result of a group of collaborative individuals working together with a collaborative spirit – just think about the team that cracked the Enigma code, or mapped the human genome.

Collaboration means a deep, collective, determination to achieve a common objective – it involves all of us believing in, and working toward, something that we could not achieve alone. More than this, it requires us to understand the power and importance of the collective over the individual, to question our motives for suggesting, or promoting a particular solution until we're sure it meets every need. In client or project work, it means continuously seeking input from our team members, influencers and stakeholders, sharing knowledge, learning, building consensus and testing our thinking.

It's more than creating something in isolation and asking for feedback – it requires genuine co-creation. It is, at its root, a social activity founded in generosity, sharing, openness and equality.

It matters because it is the antithesis of the traditional command and control style of management, which discourages challenge and innovation, and stifles growth and creativity. And it matters because it encourages supplier/vendor relationships in which energy and creativity are wasted on 'A' constantly looking for ways to pay 'B' less for doing more, while 'B' spends its time finding ways to do less and get paid more – and in which neither 'A' nor 'B' is ever satisfied that they are getting the best out of the relationship.

In a collaborative relationship, 'A' and 'B' are equally invested in the outcome, and utilise their energy and creativity with the sole aim of achieving it together, not in spite of, or at the expense of, each other. From a collaborative relationship 'A' and 'B' both receive more than they give, and each is proud to acknowledge what the other brought to the partnership.

Collaboration can be hard. If it were easy, human beings would never have needed to create the command and control model, or engage in a way of doing business which creates winners at the expense of losers, and blindly reward the what, without giving credit for the how. But collaboration does produce better results. Effective teams – comprised of people who all feel valued for their input and responsible for their output. More innovative, creative and confident organisations benefit from greater stability, because their members know it is safe to make suggestions and that it is better to try and fail than avoid taking risks. It is fundamentally important to be passionate about what they do, and – of course – stronger, longer lasting client partnerships, in which our team is your team, is what we should strive for.

In a few short years, Finn Partners has demonstrated that collaboration, both in and outside of an organisation, creates amazing outcomes. By pulling together as one team, working hard, playing nice, taking risks and amazing those around us, it is possible to deliver more than a series of completed tasks, for the lowest price.

Fortune favours the brave

KELLY PEPWORTH
MANAGING PARTNER
SPEED COMMUNICATIONS



It's a brave new world out there – technology is reinventing industries overnight, everyone is a potential stakeholder, the web is a trusted sales advisor and anyone could bring your reputation into disrepute with a click of a button. The speed of change is constant and breath-taking all at the same time.

PR itself has become more complex, richer and broader. Campaigns based on pure media relations are firmly in the past, replaced by super rich content, proof-driven messaging and omni-channel strategies. We all know that the B2B buying process compared to B2C involves multiple parties but the personalised and targeted requirement of B2B comms has reached a whole new level.

An invaluable tool in the B2B marketers' toolbox in dealing with this challenge is PR, driving engagement over time and addressing key touchpoints in the buying process. Brandon Stamschrar of MECLABS sums it up: "The buyer's pipeline requires a series of micro-yeses before getting to that macro yes." PR focuses on delivering the micro-yeses.

So how do you bravely embrace the opportunities afforded by the new world of PR that makes it thrilling not terrifying?

Know who you are – some of the simplest questions are the hardest for a business to answer; what do you believe in? What do you want to be known for? From confidence in your beliefs comes bravery in action, innate clarity on where you need to be (channels and formats) and what you need to say (content) plus focus for your communications that will allow you to set KPIs that count. Measurability won't be against column inches or web traffic but the impact of PR on the things that matter most to your business. After all, you are investing in the results of a PR campaign not the campaign itself.

Break down the walls – be brave and weave PR into the fabric of a business. The umbrella for PR needs to be bigger than just marketing to truly differentiate your content offering. Marketing, sales, HR, operations and IT should all be feeding into and in synergy with your PR campaigns for real impact to be achieved. Most importantly, if your PR team is not engaged with your board, aware of the ebb and flow of their thinking, it is unlikely that anything they do will be deemed strategic or of long-term value.

Set your people free – in the agency side of B2B PR your client portfolio can be broad and diverse but in my experience it's never the product, service or price that differentiates a business, but its people. It is the knowledge, insight and passion of a company's people that forms its personality. Competitive differentiation is limited so use your 'ace' card and tap into the thinking and insight of your team. Be brave and trust that you have recruited the right individuals not just to do the job but to talk to the world about it across the channels that count.

Get inside insight – innovation does not always manifest itself as something new but is an enviable ability to connect the dots across insight, offer and customer need to deliver something so valuable that buying is the only option. Similarly, insight is essential in B2B PR; it provides context, relevance and above all proof points that are needed to motivate purchasing. Our capacity to consume content is finite with over 27 million pieces being shared every day; it is PR's ability to use insight along with creative thinking to cut through the content clutter that makes it so powerful.

I believe B2B PR now and in the future is about bravery and courage – bravery in the face of change and new technology, standing firm on who you are and what you believe in, trusting in your people to lead and embrace insight and innovative channels and formats.

Maya Angelou summed this sentiment up much better than I ever could: "The most important single thing, beyond discipline and creativity, is daring to dare."

'We are going to do inbound marketing so why would we need PR?'

DEBBY PENTON
DIRECTOR
WILDFIRE



Inbound marketing is the latest big thing when it comes to B2B marketing and lead generation. And the tech sector is hot for it. Recent research by Sirius Decisions showed that the use of marketing automation systems is at its highest among US B2B tech companies, with 65 per cent adoption. And we are seeing an increasing number of clients and prospects in the UK doing or considering the same.

And who can blame them? The mighty content generating machine that is Hubspot makes for a compelling and noisy story. And it seems so simple. There are natty little equations that tell you how many leads you can generate by adding in 'x' many blogs and 'x' many hero pieces of content and 'x' number of tweets.

Feeding the marketing automation system

But where is all this content going to come from? And with all your competitors deploying the same tactics, your prospects are going to get much better at blocking out your brilliant 'five top tips to optimising your xxxx' article. So you need outstanding content that is going to get you noticed in the market. And then you need to get that content out into the big wide world, so it supports your SEO and helps people find you in the first place. And that is exactly where PR comes in.

First of all, one of the biggest challenges for marketers wanting to implement an inbound marketing strategy is how to feed the ever hungry marketing automation system. Only the lucky few have people within their businesses with the time, skill or inclination to write thought leadership content, blogs, whitepapers or even tweet. So the answer is usually to outsource.

The savvy marketers realise that an integrated approach to communications is where the real power lies. And integrated PR-led content to your inbound marketing engine is where things really start to motor.

How PR lures them in

Your PR agency will be the experts at telling you how to craft a story around your product and messages that engage target audiences, and you need to harness that skill to help motivate your target audience to come to your website and find out more about you. Once you've lured them in then you need to deliver a hub of rich content designed to encourage them to part with their contact details to see it. At that point you can begin your nurturing programme and invite them to view various bits of content that help progress them along the sales cycle, until the point you think they are ready for a sales conversation with you.

Ignore PR and you may end up with a rich hub of content on your website, that no one ever finds out about. Content-led approaches to PR can help build awareness, authoritative links and generate leads as well as give a sales team content to have more meaningful issue-led discussions with potential customers.

Agency showcase

4

Agency listings

Agencies

4.1 4CM 28

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4.1 4CM

Date founded	1981
HQ address	Challenge House Sherwood Drive, Bletchley Milton Keynes, MK3 6DP United Kingdom
Website	4cm.co.uk
Twitter	@4CM_UK
Telephone number	+44 (0)1908 533253
Contact email address	info@4cm.co.uk

Performance

GI in £m latest financial year	£549,046
GI in £m in previous financial year	£534,383
Current permanent members of staff	9

Work

Clients	SKF, Citizen, Berendsen, SUEZ Environment, Casella Measurement
Industry expertise	Engineering, science and manufacturing technology
Services offered	B2B marketing, PR and digital content

Success

Accreditations (2014)	PRCA Communications Management Standard
Trade body membership	BMC and PRCA

PR FOR ENGINEERING • PR FOR SCIENCE • PR FOR TECHNOLOGY

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SALES LEADS

If you want an agency that treats you as a partner, not a cash cow; an agency that's committed to your success, who works hard every day to build your market profile, customer engagement and lead generation, then call us today.

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MEDIA COVERAGE



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BUSINESS GROWTH



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TEL: +44 (0) 1908 533253 | WEB: WWW.4CM.CO.UK | EMAIL: INFO@4CM.CO.UK

4.2 Bite

Date founded	1995
HQ address	The Character Buidling 41b Beavor Lane London W6 9BL United Kingdom
Website	biteglobal.com
Twitter	@biteglobal
Telephone number	+44 (0)20 741 1123
Contact email address	bitelondon@biteglobal.com

Performance

GI in £m latest financial year	£7,000,000
GI in £m in previous financial year	£6,300,000
Current permanent members of staff	50

Work

Clients	Amazon, Sage, Hasbro, Telefonica, WeWork
Industry expertise	Telecomms, media and technology, professional services, enterprise apps, finance
Services offered	Digital techonology, marketing communications, creative and content production, public relations

Success

Awards (2014)	Shortlisted: PR Week Young PR Professional of the Year, Louise Waller. Shortlisted: SABRE Awards, Certificate of excellence, Connected Cars 2013.
Trade body membership	PRCA, The Marketing Society

WE WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO HELP YOU THRIVE, SURVIVE AND HIGH FIVE IN AN ALWAYS-ON WORLD AND THROUGH OUR HYPER-SYNERGISTIC MIX OF CONTENT, CREATIVE AND STRATEGY. WE CAN REACH THE RIGHT PEOPLE, SAY THE RIGHT THINGS, SWIM THROUGH THE RIGHT CHANNELS, AT THE RIGHT TIME, IN THE RIGHT WAY AND TO DO WHATEVER ELSE IS RIGHT TO DO MORE, ENGAGE MORE, ENABLE MORE AND EMPOWER MORE WITH LESS WASTED EFFICIENCY IN AN AUTHENTIC, TRANSPARENT AND AUTHENTICALLY TRANSPARENT WAY.

Unlike other agencies, we don't believe in producing content for the sake of it. Instead we take a look at everything you're already creating, then help you to RETHINK what you say and how you say it, REDUCE content pollution and duplication, and REMIX what you do, especially those parts that need a refresh.

bite®

Stopping content pollution since 1995.

4.3 CubanEight

Date founded	2009
HQ address	Cherwell Innovation Centre Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire OX25 5HD United Kingdom
Website	cubaneight.com
Twitter	@CubanEightPR
Telephone number	+44 (0)1869 238089
Contact email address	info@cubaneight.com

Performance

GI in £m latest financial year	£623,656
GI in £m in previous financial year	£613, 858
Current permanent members of staff	10

Work

Clients	Zendesk, Wandera, Outbrain, Sojern, Clearswift
Industry expertise	B2B, business services, enterprise technology (cloud/ hardware/software), education financial services, personal finance, energy, government agencies, public sector, media, online, industry associations, property, publishing, printing, retail, telecomms, transport, travel, tourism, utilities, waste industry/recycling, digital/internet services, technology, luxury goods.
Services offered	Communications planning, media relations, thought leadership, digital and social PR/marketing, product and company launches, positioning and messaging development issues and crisis management, content creation, media training, events.

Success

Awards (2014)	CIPR Pride Awards 2014 - silver award winner Corporate and Business Communications Campaign for Clearswift. PRCA DARE Awards 2014 - shortlisted for the Consultancy of the Year, Technology, Trade and B2B (Clearswift) and Media, Marketing & Measurement (Renaissance Learning). PR Week Top 40 Technology Agency. PR Week Top 40 Outside of London. PR Week Top 25 Public Sector Consultancies.
Trade body membership	PRCA

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+ our PR strategy
= business success

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siangaskell@cubaneight.com 01869 238 089 www.cubaneight.com

4.4 Finn Partners

Date founded	2011
EMEA HQ address	Unit 14 Jack's Place 6 Corbet Place London E1 6NN United Kingdom
Website	finnpartners.com
Twitter	@FinnPartners
Telephone number	+44 (0) 207 377 0349
Contact email address	London@finnpartners.com

Performance

GI in £m latest financial year	£34,500,000
GI in £m in previous financial year	£26,690,000
Current permanent members of staff	450

Work

Clients	IEEE, GT Nexus, Earthport plc, Dimension Data, Rosetta Stone
Industry expertise	Technology, education, energy, cleantech, financial services, supply chain and logistics, industry associations, professional services, aerospace.
Services offered	PR, social and digital, advertising, media buying, research, design, CSR.

Success

Awards (2014)	SABRE Awards: Best Technology Campaign
Accreditations (2014)	PRCA Communications Management Standard
Trade body membership	PRCA

One of the fastest growing PR agencies in the U.S. is now growing rapidly in Europe. **Find out why.**

In just a few short years, Finn Partners has won multiple awards for great work and a winning culture. Now, we're proud to welcome Johnson King to a partnership comprising:

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- **12 offices**
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FORT LAUDERDALE | CHICAGO | DETROIT | SAN FRANCISCO | LOS ANGELES

4.5 Speed Communications

Previous name	Bray Leino PR (Speed Communications as of January 2015)
Date founded	1975
HQ address	1-6Brighton Mews Bristol, BS8 2NW United Kingdom
Website	speedcommunications.com
Twitter	@speedcomms
Telephone number	+44 (0) 117 973 3300

Performance

GI in £m latest financial year	£2,703,000
GI in £m in previous financial year	£2,130,000
Current permanent members of staff	37

Work

Clients	Wincanton, Infineum, RAC, DS Smith, Recruitment & Employment Confederation
Industry expertise	Manufacturing and engineering, transport and logistics, professional and financial services, technology, public sector, education
Services offered	Corporate visibility and thought-leadership, content strategies and execution, investor elevation, crisis communications and reputation management, influencer engagement, CSR Communications

Success

Awards (2014)	Winner: - Fresh Awards, Silver Award for Freshest Integrated Campaign for Norwegian Seafood Council. - Fresh Awards, Bronze Award for DS Smith for Freshest Corporate Communications Campaign. Shortlisted: - B2B Marketing, B2B PR Agency 2014. - B2B Marketing, DS Smith for International Campaign. - CorpComms Awards, Young Achiever Award. - Fresh Awards, RAC for Freshest Media Relations Campaign.
Accreditations (2014)	PRCA PR Council, BiTC South West Advisory Board and National Communications Advisory Group, President of 27&More.
Trade body membership	CIPR, PRCA, The Marketing Society.



"The most important single thing, beyond discipline and creativity, is daring to dare"

Maya Angelou

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www.speedcommunications.com

T: 0117 9733300

E: kelly.pepworth@speedcomms.com

4.6 Wildfire

Date founded	1987
HQ address	The Albany Boathouse Lower Ham Road Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT2 5BB United Kingdom
Website	wildfirepr.com
Twitter	@wildfirePR
Telephone number	+44 (0)208 408 8000
Contact email address	debbyp@wildfirepr.com

Performance

GI in £m latest financial year	£2,070,633
GI in £m in previous financial year	£2,174,936
Current permanent members of staff	28

Work

Clients	Premier Farnell, Samsung, 1E, Synopsys, DNV GL
Industry expertise	IT and communications, marketing technology, consumer technology, electronics, semiconductors and design services, technology start ups, cleantech and renewables, medtech, automotive, retail technology.
Services offered	B2B technology, consumer technology, corporate communications, international, influencer relations, social media, inbound marketing, content marketing, analyst relations, digital, SEO.

Success

Awards (2014)	Shortlisted for the European Excellence Awards – Technology & Consumer Electronics, Shortlisted for the 2015 PRmoment Awards – Low Budget Campaign of the Year
Accreditations (2014)	PRCA CMS accredited
Trade body membership	PRCA

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B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as B2B Marketing magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats.

Its key products are:

- Online community
- Magazine
- Awards
- Research and reports
- Training
- Events
- Membership

For more information on any of these products or services go to b2bmarketing.net or call +44(0)20 7014 4920

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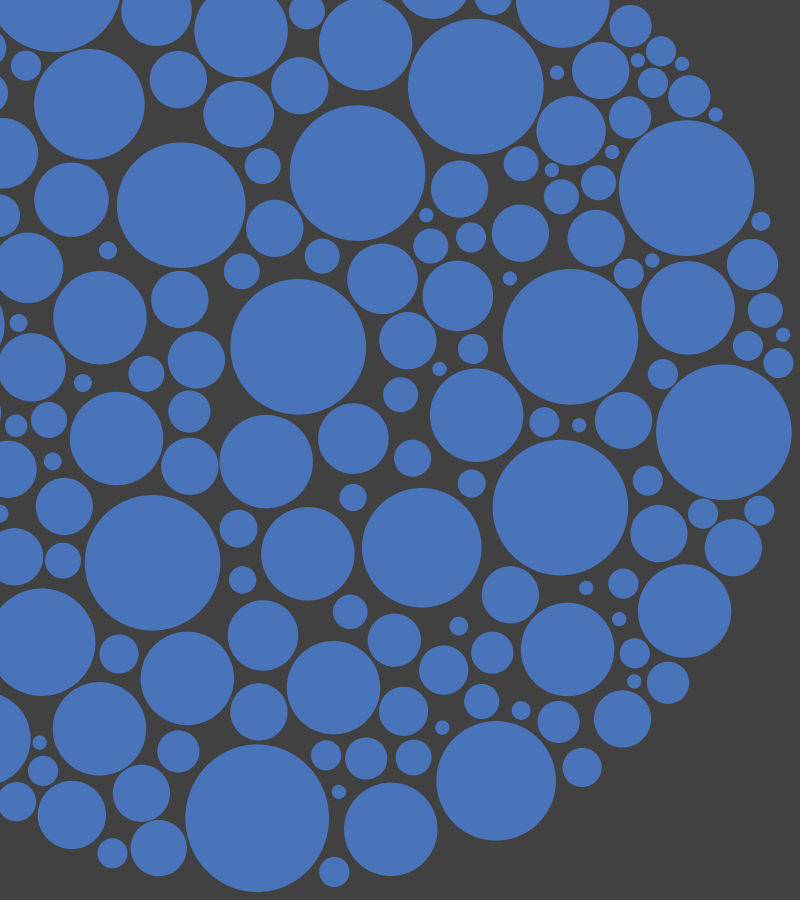
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