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How to do Technology PR in Europe



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HOW TO DO TECHNOLOGY PR IN EUROPE

To cut it short, Europe comprises of 51 countries, 23 official languages, a further 60 minority languages, seven different time zones and numerous diverse cultures. So with these figures in mind, it's safe to say that a single campaign, written, executed and communicated in one way just won't cut it. Without a doubt, the biggest mistake any company looking to build a European presence can make, is to believe there is a single approach to implementing PR across Europe.

As B2B technology specialists, with over 30 years' experience executing campaigns across Europe, we've compiled a list of tips that will help ensure you are not only effectively managing the communication process for Pan-European campaigns, but are also acknowledging and adhering to cultural differences, and ultimately avoiding getting lost in translation (so to speak)…



FIRST THINGS FIRST, REMEMBER THAT EUROPE IS NOT AMERICA

It's often said that Britain and America are "two nations divided by a common language", and that could not be more true regarding PR. What many US brands often fail to acknowledge is that the way we are sold to and communicated with is very different from what works for a US audience, and that's just us Brits, I haven't even started on our fellow European main-landers.

DON'T IMAGINE EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT

While there are real differences, it's easy to over-estimate them. People are a mix of global and local culture; even fashion conscious Italy thinks the trendiest phones are iPhones! We all have one thing in common, the fact we're working towards a common goal – presenting the brand in a positive light to the target market, influencing the audience's perception and raising the profile of the company, products and messaging…

DON'T IMAGINE WE'RE THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

Although we're different from the USA, Europe is not one country. Across Europe, "local" often refers to a country, not Europe as a whole, and while some big companies (think BMW, Siemens etc.) are so important they have impact across Europe, generally speaking journalists and your target audiences often only care about, your guessed it, local news. For this reason, journalists will prioritise news regarding local reference customers and case studies, and while they may be interested in US/global companies, particularly if it regards European growth or expansion, they are more likely to develop an interest in a global company if their messages are backed up with local market statistics.

UNDERSTAND THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL GAP

Pan-European success begins with acknowledging, understanding and adhering to one simple fact; Europe is a continent, not a

single country. We may be united under the same EU umbrella, but that's about as far as the similarities stretch. You say tom-ay-to, we say tom-ah-to, but Marco from Italy says pomodoro. You get the picture.

With that in mind, before you even think about pitching to journalists across Europe, it's important to familiarise yourself with editors backgrounds, preferences and attitudes country to country. German editors like to have hard technical information with lots of fact, whereas you'll spend a lot of time talking about the people in the local office if you meet with Italian journalists. The list of differences can go on and on (…and on).

ONE REGION DIVIDED BY 83 LANGUAGES

English as a language may well be widely spoken and understood across Europe, but do no under-estimate the importance of local language campaigns. The most successful Pan-European PR efforts will without a doubt include multiple language translations, as it's not only easier for the audience to read in their first language, but the messages you communicate will also have far more impact. Local language campaigns also ensures you're communicating the same ideas, feelings and messages to everyone, as words read in a second language may be interpreted differently. In addition, it's critical that your messaging is consistent across all media as English is in fact read by most B2B tech audiences – even US titles get some European readership online!

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

As well as the fact that different countries have different bank/national holidays, it's also important to be aware of the typical vacation periods and the fact that Europeans do tend to take long summer holidays. As an example, holidays in the Nordics are typically taken in May and June, whereas France and Germany both take August off. For these reasons, ensure that any announcements are planned and timed appropriately.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE GIRL (OR GUY) NEXT DOOR

When it comes to content, for example press releases, it's usually more effective to quote a local spokesperson for the company. Having a comment from the European regional manager, for example, is going to have more impact than quoting the US MD. Additionally, during press briefings, try pairing your spokesperson with someone who understands the local market. Additionally, during press briefings, journalists will prefer to speak with a local language person, however if this isn't possible, try pairing your spokesperson with someone who understands the local market.

DON'T RUN BEFORE YOU CAN WALK

Let's be honest, it's unrealistic to think you would be successful in trying to accomplish all markets at once, especially in unknown territory. Also, given the importance of local language content, it's hard to reach a lot of countries if you are going to do it well (at least initially). A more strategic approach, therefore, would be to start small and scale out. Depending on what your budget allows for, consider looking at 1-3 initial markets to build presence in, and scale out as you achieve growth in each. Within the B2B tech industry, both the UK and Germany have an enormous presence, and are often great companies to begin with.

Implementing a successful campaign across Europe requires a solid understanding of the media landscape across this diverse continent. While messaging and strategy should be consistent across your entire communications efforts, your European outreach and execution should have the flexibility to localize campaigns in each targeted country. Should you require any help in implementing a successful pan-European PR campaign, please don't hesitate to get in touch on +44 (0)1243 531123, or alternatively send over an email to mike@napierb2b.com.



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Launched in 1984, Napier was one of the first agencies in Europe to specialise in the electronics market, subsequently expanding to help clients in a range of B2B technology sectors. Initially a PR agency, Napier responded to the clients' need to manage information across every element of the marketing mix by bringing together a team of multi-talented and multi-lingual engineers, linguists and technical journalists as well as PR and marketing professionals.