

# No 'pro' without PR

**With 2020 providing a huge challenge with the Covid-19 crisis, it looks like there will be little let-up until the vaccine has been rolled out to most of the UK. It's even more important that companies remain visible during this continued unprecedented time. Purplex MD Andrew Scott discusses how companies can make the most out of PR to gain success**

**D**espite the economic impact and uncertainty around Covid-19 the home improvement industry continues to operate well above expected levels.

The good news is the outlook for 2021 appears positive with more people working from home and avoiding spending their money on long haul holidays.

But that doesn't mean this year will not be without its challenges – and there is set to be more winners, and losers, than ever before.

Businesses have already had to react and adapt their marketing strategies to tackle the Covid-19 crisis, with some scaling back and others stopping altogether.

The winners will be those who invest to acquire market share while the losers will be those who stand still.

It has been proven that businesses that actively engage in marketing and strategic communications are more likely to grow and will come out the other side of a crisis stronger.

With its ability to shape perceptions and build credibility, PR is the cornerstone of all marketing endeavours and is even more important in the current climate.

During uncertain times, consumers gravitate towards brands they know they can trust and there is no better way to build trust in your brand than through good PR.

One thing the Covid-19 pandemic has done is to make the nation more addicted to news, media, and their mobile phones so it is vital that you sit across all those channels with your PR.

But how do you secure the coverage you need and reach your customers in this new Covid age? Here are my tips to make sure your PR delivers.

### Be where your customers are

Being where your customers are is vital. The digital shift since Covid-19 has been rapid as more and more people have migrated to digital-first in their daily lives.

When 'normality' returns, we will be living in a new era of digital and it's important that your PR has a strong presence online.

Almost every publication or media outlet will have a website so, even if you can't get your story in print, editors should still be able to put it up online.

These stories can also be easily shared on social media, with LinkedIn the place to maximise customer engagement and brand exposure. As the largest global community of business professionals, decision-makers, and influencers, sharing your PR will get you noticed and grow your brand through word-of-mouth. After all, when it comes to brand, people trust people.

### Be seen offline

Ironically, despite the digital shift, the best way to build your brand is offline. Showrooms, radio, local PR, print media, supporting charities and sponsorship all instil trust and credibility and as a result, amplify online results.

Traditional face-to-face PR will be even more important this year too. Of course, online communication platforms like Zoom

and Microsoft Teams have been lifesavers during the last six months, providing us with convenient ways to keep in touch with our customers.

But we have been starved of the personal touch and the window, door and conservatory industry has always been about people getting together to help drive it forward, and deals being done on a hand-shake (or elbow nudge).

This year will see a sense of normality return in that respect with both the FIT Show in May and the Glazing Summit in October, both of which will attract real industry decision makers. Making sure you are at industry events to engage with potential customers will be vital.

### Don't forget the fundamentals

Of course, the fundamentals of PR don't change, whether you are in a global pandemic or not, so continue to cut through the noise and deliver the quality content editors are looking for and get creative with eye-catching ad design and copy.

And stay relevant through the press with good news stories on your company to reinforce the message that you are thriving. Show your customers you are taking the lead by commenting on the issues and challenges facing the industry.

Your marketing strategy for the year ahead will be crucial to you increasing your market share – and PR should play an important role in it.



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