Strategic Media Relations and PR Planning

18 – 22 October 2027
Vienna (Austria)



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Strategic media relations and PR planning is the work of setting public relations objectives that serve organisational goals and building the journalist relationships, messages and content that carry them to the public. This 1-week course is for PR and communications professionals who handle the media week to week, and it ends with a twelve-month PR plan with a media list and pitch pack. Blackbird Training Centre presents this strategic media relations and PR planning course.

Introduction

The course rests on three planning and measurement frameworks. RACE sets out the PR planning cycle as research, action, communication and evaluation. The PESO model sorts channels into paid, earned, shared and owned media so that each message has a suitable route. The Barcelona Principles set agreed rules for measuring PR outcomes rather than counting clippings or advertising value equivalents. The level is practitioner, for people already working in PR. Teaching uses a running case of a hospital group and a consumer goods brand, with pitch rehearsals and mock interviews.

Course Objectives

- Apply the RACE cycle to turn an organisational goal into measurable PR objectives.
- Distinguish earned from owned and shared media and select the right mix for a campaign message.
- Compare a press release, a pitch email and an exclusive offer, and select which suits a given story and journalist.
- Interpret a journalist's beat and recent coverage to build a targeted media list.
- Justify key messages and proof points for three audiences drawn from one core narrative.
- Define PR outcome measures in line with the Barcelona Principles and report them to senior management.

Target Audience

- PR officers and executives who pitch stories every week and decide which journalist gets which angle first.
- Communications managers who build PR plans and choose which objectives and channels deserve budget.
- Corporate affairs and media relations specialists who prepare spokespeople and judge when to accept an interview request.
- Content and digital communication staff who produce material for press and social channels and decide how to adapt one story for each.
- Marketing professionals taking on PR duties who must decide where earned media fits beside paid campaigns.



Course Outline

Day 1: PR Planning Foundations

- PR Objectives vs Business Objectives: Linking Awareness and Attitude Goals to Organisational Results
- RACE Planning Cycle: Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation in PR Work
- Situation Analysis: Media Audit, Share of Voice and Perception Research Before Planning
- Stakeholder and Audience Mapping: Prioritising Publics by Influence and Interest
- PR Plan Structure: Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Timeline, Budget and Evaluation Sections

Day 2: Building Media Relationships

- Journalist Beat Research: Reading Coverage History to Find the Right Contact
- Media List Building: Segmenting General, Trade and Online Outlets by Audience
- Press Release vs Pitch Email vs Exclusive: Matching Format to Story Value
- Newsworthiness Tests: Timeliness, Impact, Proximity, Conflict and Human Interest Criteria
- Long-Term Media Relationships: Briefings, Background Calls and Respecting Embargoes

Day 3: Messages, Narratives and Content

- Core Narrative vs Key Messages: Overall Story Compared With Audience-Specific Points
- Message House: Umbrella Statement, Pillars and Proof Points for Spokespeople
- PESO Model: Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned Media as Message Routes
- Content for Media Platforms: Op-Eds, Data Stories, Visuals and Short Video Formats
- Interview Preparation: Bridging Techniques, Soundbites and Rehearsal for Spokespeople

Day 4: Digital PR and Reputation Issues

- Digital PR: Online Coverage, Backlinks and Social Amplification of Earned Stories
- Influencer Relations vs Journalist Relations: Disclosure Rules, Fit and Audience Reach
- Issues vs Crises: Spotting Rising Concerns Before They Become Headlines
- Crisis Readiness Within the PR Plan: Holding Statements and Escalation Contacts
- Online Reputation Monitoring: Alerts, Sentiment Tracking and Response Thresholds

Day 5: PR Plan in Practice

- Pitch Rehearsal: Applying Media Lists and Message Houses to Live Story Pitches
- Outputs vs Outcomes: Measuring PR Under the Barcelona Principles
- PR Dashboards: Reporting Coverage Quality, Message Pull-Through and Audience Response
- Ethics in Media Relations: Accuracy, Transparency and Avoiding Paid-For Coverage
- Final Deliverable: Twelve-Month PR Plan With Media List and Pitch Pack



Skills You Will Gain

- PR objective setting
- Media list segmentation
- Story pitching
- Message house development
- PESO channel planning
- Spokesperson preparation
- PR outcome measurement

Why Attend This Course

- From sending the same release to every outlet to pitching tailored angles to journalists who cover the subject.
- From lists of PR activity to objectives tied to organisational goals and measured as outcomes.
- From improvised interview answers to spokespeople briefed with a message house and rehearsed soundbites.
- From scattered tactics to a twelve-month PR plan with media list and pitch pack, the final deliverable of the course.

Conclusion

Media relations at a strategic level is the steady work of earning coverage that advances organisational goals, rather than reacting to whatever the news cycle brings. The course separates PR objectives from business objectives, earned from owned media, and outputs from outcomes. It suits PR and communications practitioners who manage the media every week and want a planned, measurable approach, with crisis readiness included as one part of the plan rather than its centre.

Course FAQs

What is strategic media relations and PR planning?

It is the practice of setting PR objectives from organisational goals and then building media relationships, messages and content to achieve them. Planning sets the direction, media relations earns the coverage and evaluation shows whether attitudes or behaviour changed.

What is the difference between earned and owned media in strategic media relations?

Earned media is coverage the organisation does not pay for, such as a news story by a journalist. Owned media is content it controls on its own channels, such as its website or newsletter. Earned media brings third-party credibility; owned media brings control.



Which frameworks does the Strategic Media Relations and PR Planning course follow?

It follows the RACE planning cycle, the PESO model for channel choice and the Barcelona Principles for measuring PR outcomes.

Is the Strategic Media Relations and PR Planning course right for a PR executive?

Yes. A PR executive who pitches stories and keeps media contacts gains a planning method, sharper pitching formats and outcome measures, at the practitioner level the course is written for.

What do delegates produce in the strategic media relations course?

Delegates produce a twelve-month PR plan with objectives, audiences, key messages, channel mix and measures, plus a segmented media list and a pitch pack rehearsed during the course.

