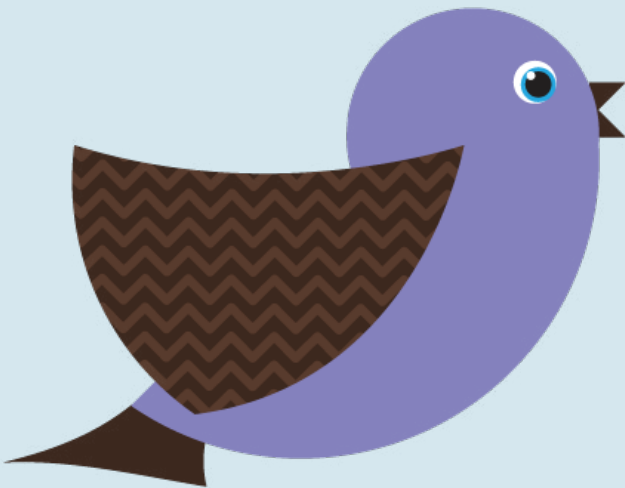


FOURTH DAY
PUBLIC RELATIONS



The Purpose of PR 2016

.....
Research Report
.....

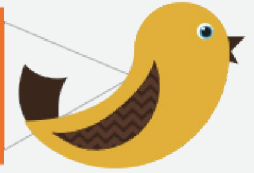


.....

Contents

Introduction
Key findings
Purpose of PR
Tactics
Budget
Social media, SEO
Media
Relevance and
importance of PR
.....

INTRODUCTION FROM XANTHE VAUGHAN WILLIAMS



PR is an ever-evolving discipline. The changes over the past decade have been unparalleled, brought about by the emergence of new media and the decline of traditional.

This research project is about reviewing the status of PR with these changes in mind; how it sits amongst other marketing disciplines, how businesses perceive and use PR, and what they want out of it today and in the foreseeable future.

Our French office, Quatrième Jour, conducted similar research a year ago. Working alongside our Parisian colleagues, it is apparent that PR approaches differ across the channel, so we were very interested to understand how UK based businesses would respond in comparison to the French.

The UK research was based on an online survey and in depth telephone interviews with more than fifty UK B2B businesses. It asked a variety of questions focusing on the purpose of PR, the use of social media and how coverage in different media is valued. Respondents informed us of the importance given to PR in their organisations and how this will change in the future.

Encouragingly, the majority of businesses we surveyed (97%) stated that PR is still relevant and that they (91%) expect it to grow further in importance to them.

However, many respondents struggled to state what proportion of their marketing budget is spent on PR. At the heart of their confusion is PR's increasing crossover with other marketing disciplines: social media, SEO, and the creation and publication of different types of content, are particular areas of overlap. For instance, one respondent explained that their organisation now uses traditional PR as its main SEO tactic, prioritising it over link-building and

focusing on the power of published comment on relevant topics in the right publications.

It is also evident that many companies do not fully grasp the value of social media or how to maximise it. With a few exceptions, the majority of respondents focus predominantly on Twitter and are still treating this as a largely standalone medium. However, there seems to be a dawning realisation that it cannot be managed in isolation long term.

For almost 70% of respondents the main purpose of PR is to improve brand reputation. In spite of the proliferation of new disciplines that may or may not be classified under the PR umbrella, media relations was cited as the most valued tactic.

PR professionals have always tailored their skills to accommodate new approaches. Now, the industry has an opportunity to demonstrate that its expertise can be adapted to new forms of marketing and continue to play a key, strategic role in the mix.

In 2016 companies will increasingly need to bring together all their external PR and marketing specialists in a cohesive and coherent way, navigating the areas where overlap may occur. The role of an in-house marketing communications manager who brings it all together has never been more vital.

Co-founder and director,
Fourth Day Public Relations



KEY FINDINGS



56%



Online coverage is now preferred to print:
56% vs 38%

69%



For 69% of respondents the main purpose of PR is to improve brand reputation

53%



Media relations is by far the most valued PR tactic

88%



88% of businesses favour Twitter over other forms of social media

97%



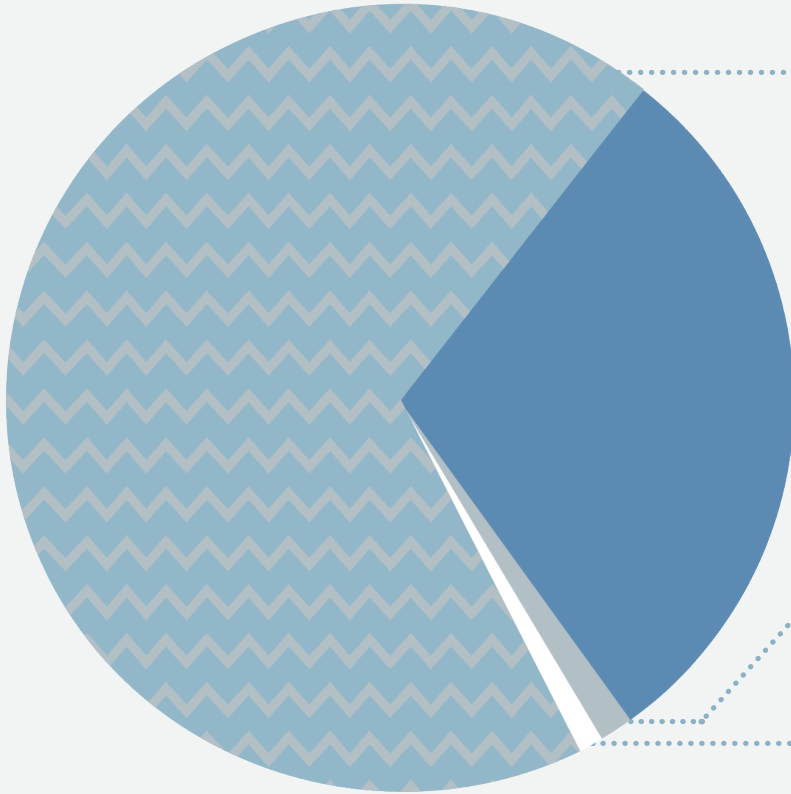
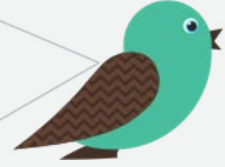
97% believe PR is relevant to their business

91%



91% say PR will increase in importance over the next year

THE PURPOSE OF PR



69% IMPROVE BRAND REPUTATION

30% SALES AND BUSINESS LEADS

1.4% RECRUITMENT

1.2% FUNDING

“What do you want PR to achieve for your company?”

“To improve brand reputation” was ranked as the most valued purpose for PR by 69% of respondents.

In the telephone interviews, brand reputation was often stated even before alternative answers were considered.

This is in contrast to content marketing, where, according to a recent survey by the Content Marketing Institute, brand reputation follows sales, engagement and lead generation as the primary objective.

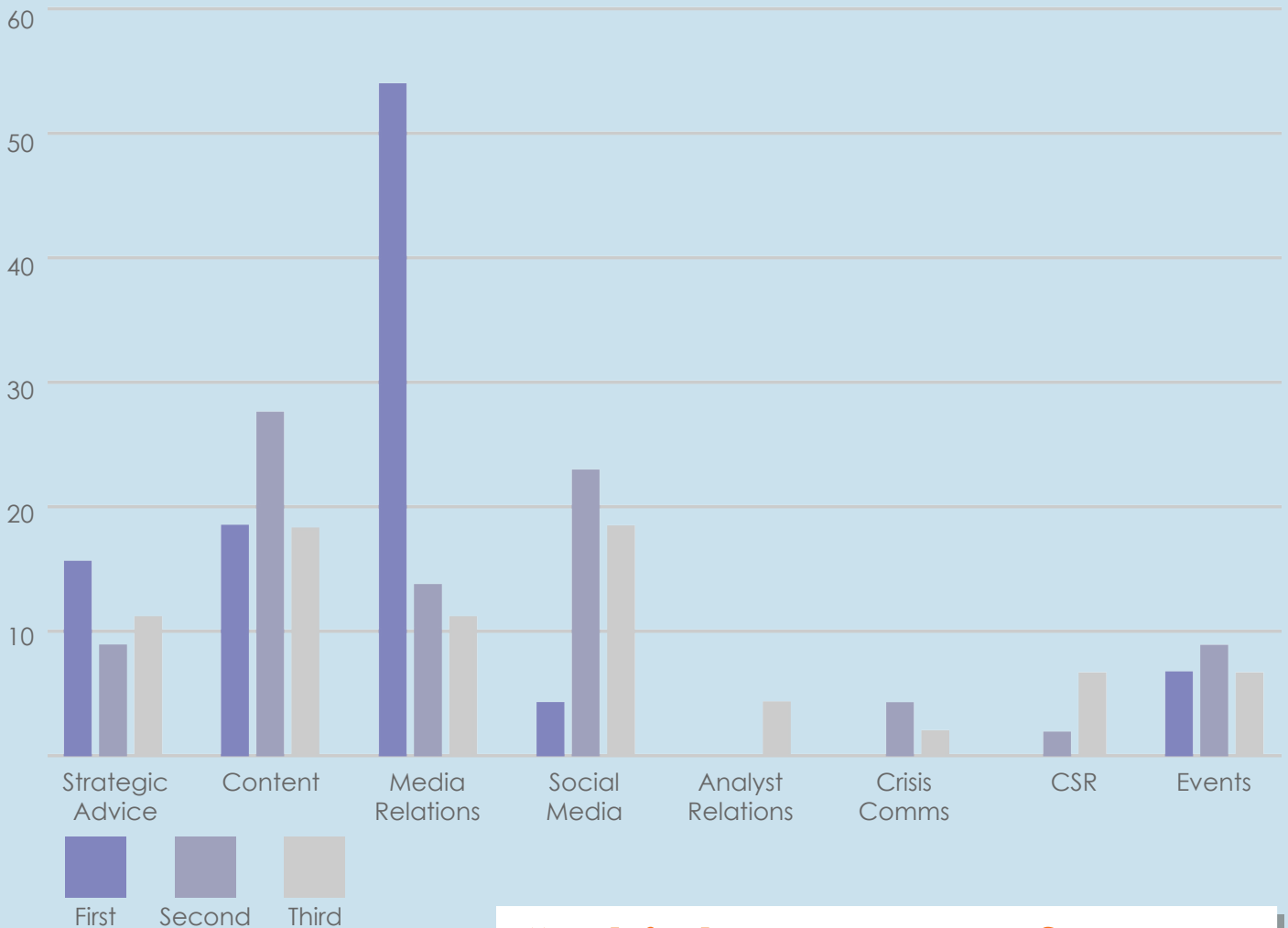
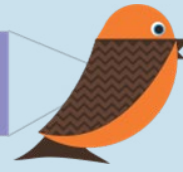
30% did say, however, that “sales and business leads” was the primary reason for their PR activity.

“To provide recruitment assistance” and “to attract funding or investment” were also listed as secondary objectives for PR.

In the telephone interviews, respondents also talked about ‘education of a topic or product’, ‘building awareness of products and services’, and ‘communicating company messaging’.

“To improve brand reputation” was ranked as the most valued purpose for PR by 69% of respondents.

TACTICS



“Which aspects of PR do you value most?”

Media relations is by far the most valued tactic with 53.4% of respondents putting it first.

Respondents were asked to rank the tasks in order of value.

Media relations is by far the most valued tactic with 53.4% of respondents putting it first. It was also the top answer in the French survey.

Content and strategic advice were the second and third most valued. In France, content and social media took those positions.

One interviewee added that they appreciate a proactive approach to media liaison. Another stated: “we want the agency to create a story/press hook for the project/activity we want to promote”.

The cross over between disciplines became apparent from some of the answers. One respondent said that they take a broad view of PR as much of this function now merges with marketing.

Several telephone interviewees also said that some of the activities did not fall strictly in to the domain of PR for their business.

BUDGET



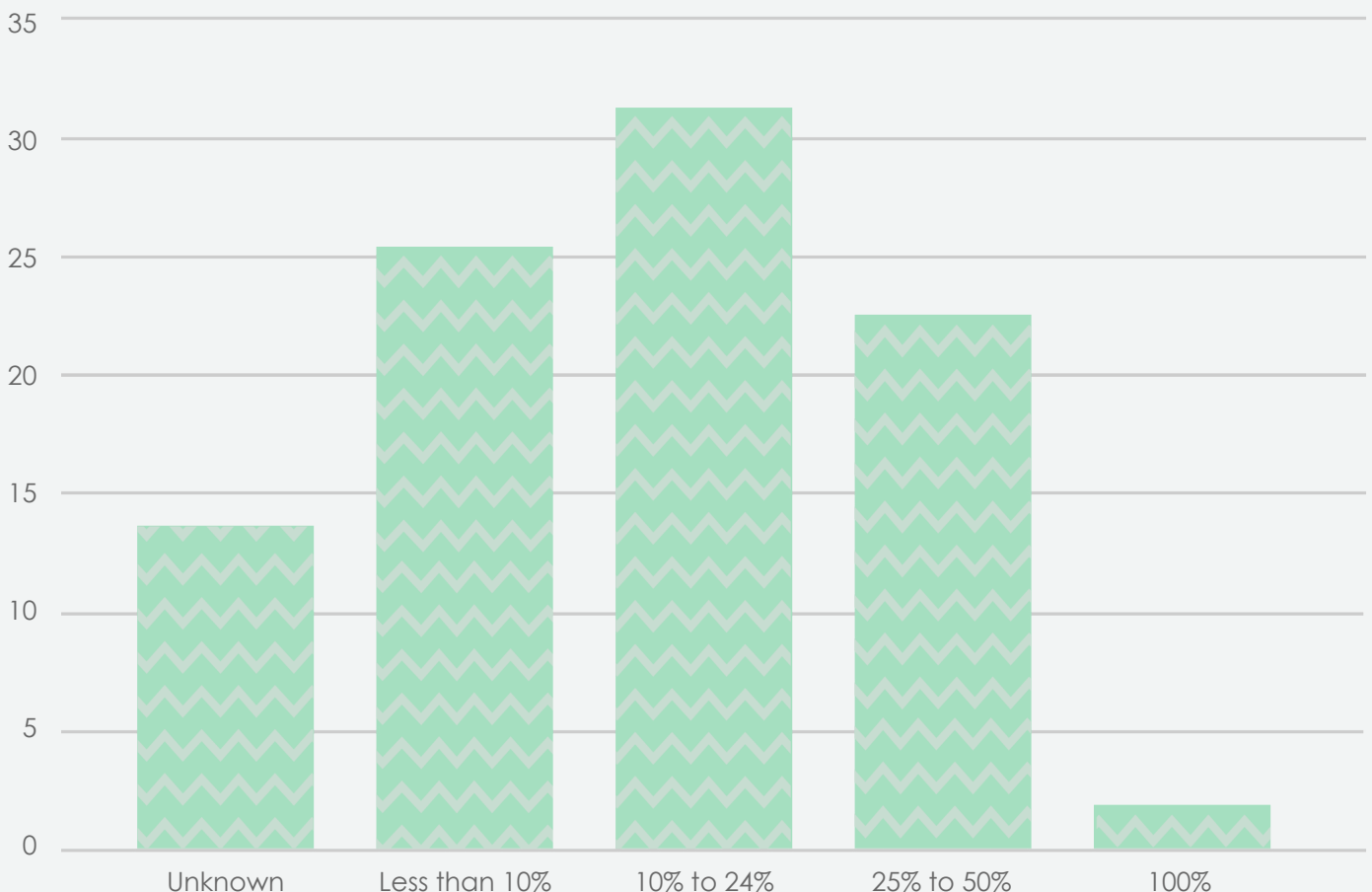
“What percentage of your marketing budget do you spend on PR alone, as opposed to other activities such as advertising/events?”

It is becoming difficult to define precisely what should be categorised as PR.

Many respondents struggled to state what proportion of their marketing budget is spent on PR, and many of the answers given were estimates.

Again, it was apparent that it is becoming difficult to define precisely what should be categorised as PR.

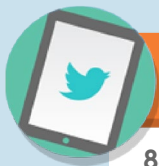
Social media, SEO, and the creation and publication of different types of content, are particular areas of overlap between disciplines.



SOCIAL MEDIA & SEO



“On which social networks is your company present?”



Social Media

88% of businesses favour Twitter over other forms of social media for connecting with stakeholders. In France it was also 88%.

Most respondents' businesses use Twitter regularly – at least 2-3 times a day.

Some are using social media strategically. One interviewee said: “Use of social media platforms and campaigns tie into our company website, which we use for inbound sales.”

Although some businesses confessed a lack of understanding of social media: how it can be used to connect with customers, prospects, partners and the media, how to manage it and how to create content for it.

This hasn't stopped social media, in some instances, reducing the perceived value of traditional media relations

“Organic pick ups from social posts are increasing, so the need to pitch in ideas to journalists will probably be less important in the future,” said a respondent.



SEO

When asked about measurement, some – mainly digital businesses – said they were now measuring the impact of PR on SEO. Some companies now appreciate that PR has much more influence on SEO than the ability to gain backlinks.

“If an article includes the brand name with the desired messaging and relevant product information, in the right media, people searching for advice on that topic will seek out the company, regardless of it including the company URL,” said an interviewee.

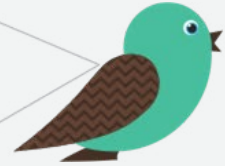


Integrated Strategy

Only a few respondents were really considering PR as a fundamental element to be integrated in their SEO strategy, however. Many also admitted their business's social media activity is not included in strategic marketing campaigns.

As these functions develop, there is a clear need for strategic advice that will help organisations to bring content, media relations, social media and SEO activity together in a cohesive way.

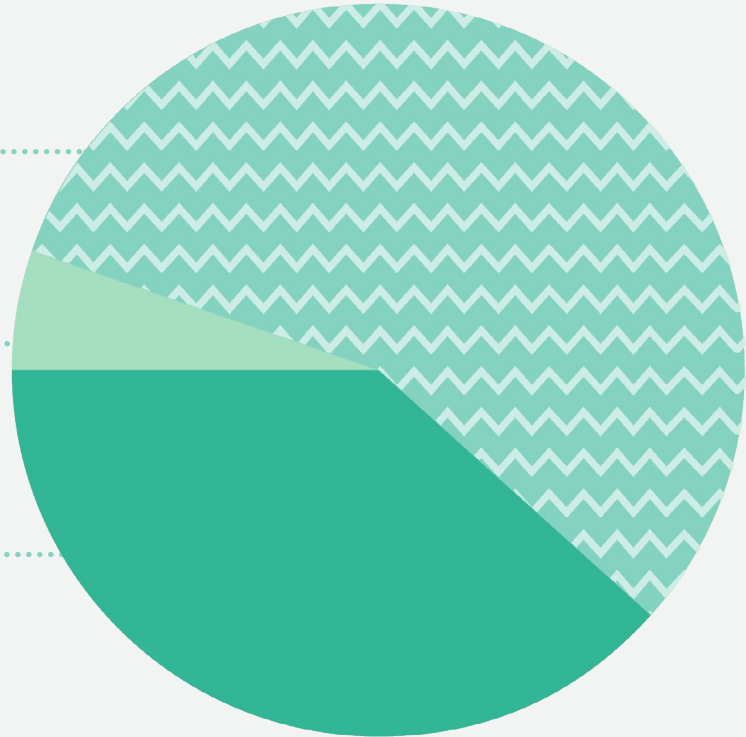
MEDIA



Online

Other

Print



“Please rank the following forms of coverage in order of importance: print, online, social networks, other.”

“Quality coverage” was rated higher than quantity, equivalent ad rates and links to websites.

While some businesses still hanker after national print coverage, more are seeing the benefit of online coverage.

Online coverage is now preferred to print: 56.4% vs 38.46%. This is in contrast to France where print is still top.

Reasons given for preferring online coverage include: “stays around longer”, “viewed by more people”, “easier to share”.

Respondents were also asked what is the success criteria for coverage.

“Quality coverage” was rated higher than quantity, equivalent ad rates and links to websites.

“Quality” was qualified as:

Well written/ hitting the right audience / in depth / accurate / focus on the company / reflecting company messages and themes.

Broadcast, blogs and other forums were cited in interviews as of interest for particular campaigns.



91% said PR would increase in relevance in the coming year and beyond

Despite all the changes the marketing world is undergoing, it was made clear that organisations still hold PR in high esteem.

“Is PR still relevant to your company?”

97% of respondents said PR is either somewhat or very relevant now.

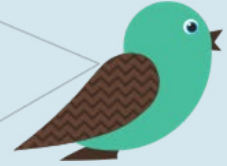
Despite all the changes the marketing world is undergoing, it was made clear that organisations still hold PR in high esteem.

“What is the future of PR in your company?”

91% said PR would increase in relevance in the coming year and beyond.

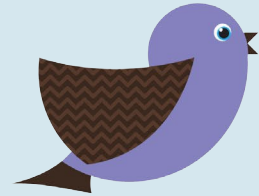
The role PR plays may be adapting to include and integrate with other marketing disciplines, but respondents said they believe PR will continue to be an important component of their business activities.

CONTACT



FOURTH DAY

PUBLIC RELATIONS



**For further information
please contact:**

Tel: +44 (0)20 7403 4411

Tweet: @fourthdayPR

Email: xanthe@fourthday.co.uk
