



The Chartered Institute of Public Relations Public Relations Consultants Association IR Society NUJ

Media Spamming Charter

Introduction

This Charter has been prepared by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), the PRCA (Public Relations Consultants Association), and the Investor Relations Society (IRS) and is backed by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ). It provides guidance to Members and the wider PR profession on standards of conduct when working with the media and bloggers.

The CIPR, the PRCA, the IRS and NUJ are united in their efforts to enhance professional standards.

These best practice guidelines are designed as a point of reference for practitioners who work with journalists and bloggers. This document is a statement of best practice and not an addition to existing Codes of Conduct or membership rules and regulations.

Research and Planning:

- Communications objectives, strategies and tactics, informed by research, should be set for all communications campaigns, together with evaluation measures;
- Communications plans should include a target audience overview to ensure that relevant audiences are being reached and to help practitioners map the results to the appropriate influencers (journalists, bloggers etc);
- Following a communications plan will help practitioners to avoid spamming journalists unnecessarily or accidentally during implementation of a communications plan and will provide evidence that practitioners have conducted thorough and relevant research into the appropriate influencers for the plan.

Relevance:

- Practitioners should invest time in researching the editorial scope and interests of a journalist/blogger before approaching them, to ensure their area of responsibility is relevant to the communications plan;
- Practitioners should be aware of the deadlines journalists are working to, the time zones they are working in and the press days for print publications and consider these when making contact;
- Practitioners should consider the relevance of interacting with a particular journalist and blogger as part of a particular communications programme;
- As part of the media relations process, practitioners may benefit from creating biographies about journalists and bloggers they work closely with in order to build better relationships with these contacts and greater understanding of their needs, interests and preferences;
- Ensure information distributed to journalists and bloggers is targeted as much as possible, timely and relevant and in a format that is accessible and suited to their needs;



- Practitioners could maximise the media contact's experience with a client by being accessible, by providing additional information quickly, by being available for questions and by providing well-trained spokespeople;
- Encouraging and respecting feedback from journalists and bloggers could help improve the results of a communications plan. For example, they may request information in a certain format, require contact via email rather than telephone, request no further contact regarding the plan or request to be removed from all or some distribution lists. Keeping good records which are shared by colleagues will help avoid non-targeted, or spam, activity in future;
- Ensure that media contacts understand when you, or a client, are providing background information or information that is embargoed.

Reputation:

- Endeavour to honour promises and respect deadlines and inform media contacts as soon as possible if there is a problem;
- Confusing, misleading, inaccurate or non-targeted emails may damage the reputations of the practitioner, the employer and the client;
- Practitioners should not 'guarantee' coverage unless it is contributed in nature or agreed by the publication for a particular purpose, but even then other editorial circumstances may dictate that the coverage does not appear;
- Practitioners should be aware that journalists / bloggers may block individuals or companies if they believe they are being sent emails and other content that they perceive to be irrelevant to their work. Occasionally, some journalists/bloggers may publish the names of individuals or companies who may appear to be distributing spam;
- Practitioners and their colleagues should avoid the practice of hounding journalists / bloggers for information or feedback;
- Educating clients about media contacts, their needs and the pressures they experience will help them to understand editorial functions and develop more informed relationships with relevant and important journalists/bloggers;
- Practitioners and their colleagues should be aware of the potential negative consequences of media spamming and the impact it may have on the results of a communications plan;
- If the situation arises, practitioners may need to inform clients of the potential risks of media spamming to their brand values and reputation, and may refuse to conduct such campaigns on the clients' behalf.

NUJ support

The NUJ welcomes and supports this Charter which aims to improve the working relationship between the media and PR practitioners. The NUJ is committed to high standards of ethical practice and NUJ members are expected to abide by their [ethical guidelines](#) and working practices. Members working in PR are strongly encouraged to work within the provisions of this Charter, which have been developed in conjunction with the, CIPR, PRCA and IRS.

Further resources

CIPR Code of Conduct
PRCA Code of Conduct
Memorandum and Articles of the IR Society

Websites

[CIPR](#)
[PRCA](#)
[IRS](#)
[NUJ](#)