

Why a business always needs PR

 By [Dominique Pienaar](#)

7 Jun 2018

2018 has certainly been an exhilarating roller coaster ride for South Africans so far. A new president, a cabinet reshuffle, stronger (but still uncertain) currency all point to positives, but a 1% increase in VAT, volatile fuel prices and a general rise in the cost of living for everyday South Africans, means consumers and businesses and critically reviewing their budgets - and spend for the foreseeable future.



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For many businesses, it means looking for ways to reduce expenses in order to balance the impact of the current economy. More often than not, this results in the PR budget being amongst the first to be culled.

Culling PR might just be one of the biggest mistakes any company can make. PR allows an organisation to build its reputation, create a brand presence, engage and forge a relationship with an audience and earn their trust. In a consumer-led economy, all of these elements are critical in sustaining a business through times of instability and uncertainty.

Capitec and Viceroy incident

These are also the elements that come to an organisation's rescue during times of crisis. A recent example of the importance of PR, was the Capitec and Viceroy incident, which happened earlier this year.



Reputation is the be-all and end-all

Clare O'Donovan 31 Jan 2018



Within the banking sector, Capitec has earned a reputation as the underdog who has taken on the big four banks and beating them at their own game. It is also considered the champion for the people. It was, therefore, with an air of disbelief, that people read about the Viceroy report that detailed reckless lending practices allegations against the bank.

Having a brand presence and reputation doesn't only serve to avert a potential crisis, there is also much truth in the old adage - out of sight, out of mind. In a highly competitive and economically pressured environment, it is important to remain

visible and be perceived as an active role player in the market.

Long-term effect of culling PR

Customers need to see what a brand is doing, understand its offering or cause, and feel a brand affiliation. They need to believe that a brand listens to them, understands them, their needs and responds accordingly.

Without PR and an integrated communications approach, a potential customer has no means of understanding your business, its values, offerings and propositions. Therefore, there is no association or affinity towards your brand to encourage loyalty or support. This ultimately influences the success or failure of a business or organisation.

Culling PR is a short-term solution that may provide temporary relief on budgets, but the long-term effect of this will invariably impact business revenue. It is during the toughest times that your name and what it represents is sometimes all you have. Businesses need to nurture and build this continuously.

ABOUT DOMINIQUE PIENAAR

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