

# 10 ways to survive the PR strategy jungle

By [Allison MacDonald](#)

9 Dec 2021

It's a jungle out there: wild, untamed and teeming with a huge number of PR strategy beasts. Some of them are fluffy, smell of freshly-baked butterscotch cupcakes, and are begging to be tamed. Others are wilder than the fiercest south-easter whipping the Cape Point fynbos to within an inch of its life. They snarl and snap, have foul-smelling slobbery jowls and teeth ready to rip you and your communication world to shreds.



Source: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

Here are ten shortish and sharpish thoughts that may be helpful as you navigate the perilous swampland of PR strategy.

## 1. Trust your instincts

Hold on to that very first gut reaction: the one that comes to you like a bolt of lightning while you're reading through pages of the brief. It's the gleaming kernel of pure, honest genius that's all-too-often lost in a mountain of clunking communications predictability.

## 2. Prioritise the market... Always!

Your client is a toothpaste maker. Her product has sorbitol, fluoride, calcium and the rose-scented burps of baby cherubs. But the market doesn't care. Write a strat for the market. More sexy, kissable mouths. Less sorbitol. Fewer burping

cherubs.

### 3. Segmentation is sexy

You can't get every person in South Africa loving your client's offering and swearing eternal brand loyalty to it. But you can get a very carefully defined and ring-fenced audience thinking it's cool as cucumber ice cream. Segmentation is the magic that makes it happen.



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### 4. Go look at the sky

Do you see that little two by two centimetre bit of blue? That's for press releases. The rest is for all the other tools you have in your jangling toolbox. The communications world has exploded to include a myriad of platforms, tools and gadgets. Pick and choose the ones that are going to do the best job for this client, this strat and that target market.

### 5. Make the news if you have to

Propose things that blast through the clutter. Remember that brilliant strategy that had a scooter brand ticketing cars for being petrol greedy? Now we're talking...

### 6. Know your client

We're not talking a quick whizz around the client website. Talk to people who know the chief marketing officer. Find out how people experience the brand. Have coffee with a journalist and ask the awkward questions. Be nosy. And let all that intel inform your strat.

### 7. Making the dream work

Talk to other people. Talk, especially, to people who are different to you: different genders, cultures, ages. Listen to them very carefully. This is not your personal magnum opus. It's a strat that must reach a market. It's a big, diverse world out there. It's bigger and more diverse than little old you.



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### 8. Be original

Get a pair of pliers and rip the 'copy, paste' buttons off of your computer keyboard. Throw them out the window. Bring fresh, original thought to every single strat you write. Not to is to betray your own intelligence; to defraud your client, and to set yourself up to fail.

### 9. Walk away

Stop pounding away at the keyboard. Give the mouse a break. Get up and go walk barefoot on the lawn. Take a shower. Bake a batch of ginger snaps. Let your ideas percolate. Wait for the flashes of insight and cleverness. They will come.

Promise.

## **10. Look after number one**

Be kind to yourself. Congratulate yourself generously and often on your cleverness. Eat ice-cream. And, most of all, don't take it all too seriously. Sure, it's a serious business. But the best ideas come to people who have a light and playful heart. Make sure yours is a feather kitten.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Allison MacDonald has worked with heaps of clients at five different agencies. She's very happily at home now at Flow Communications as an account director.

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