



REQ

PR Checklist: 13 Steps to Conquer Public Sector Communications

Conquering the public sector PR challenge is something that many companies fail because they misunderstand one fundamental rule: **Marketing to the government is distinctly different than marketing to businesses.**

Government agencies have unique needs and face different obstacles than private sector businesses. They respond to different language and terminology. And they can easily see through marketing buzzwords.

A successful public sector PR program speaks to the distinct needs of the government by effectively incorporating messaging around agencies' core concerns.

These days, many government agencies are challenged to:

- Improve constituent services
- Work with reduced budgets
- Ramp up cybersecurity
- Modernize legacy systems
- Comply with government mandates

With this checklist you will learn how to:

- Create an impactful public sector PR program
- Get your messaging across in the most effective way and cut through the noise
- Gain the attention of the press

How do you conquer the public sector PR challenge?

With this 13-point checklist, you will be able to break through to editors at the publications your target audience is reading and distinguish your company from the many others competing for government dollars.

To learn more about our public sector PR expertise and see how we can amplify your business to own what's next:

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1 Craft public sector-specific messages for unique audiences

Replacing the word “enterprise” with “government” is not enough when crafting a message for government audiences. Government agencies speak their own languages, full of references to federal mandates, cybersecurity, and other factors that drive their organizations.

Federal, state, and local agencies all have different needs and face unique challenges. You need to be able to create messages that are hand-tailored to and truly resonate with these audiences.



2 Understand what the media wants

Public sector media are looking for three things: news, expert sources that can comment on said news, and government customers who can share their stories. To meet the public sector PR challenge you need to provide at least one of these hooks.

3 Define what makes you stand out in the government space

Reporters are hungry for information that can help them flesh out their stories, but they can get that insight from any number of companies.

You need to be ready to give them something they can't find anywhere else – a nugget of data from one of your own research reports, or in-depth analysis on a breaking news story from a top executive who has worked in the government sector will help meet the reporter's needs and set you apart.

4 Identify the appropriate spokespeople for government media

Your public sector spokespeople may not – and probably should not – be the same people you use for communicating to the B2B media. Use those who are extremely well-versed in the government arena, as reporters appreciate the opportunity to speak to people who can provide an insider perspective.





5 Get trendy

Trends aren't just for the fashion industry; government reporters love them, too. In fact, reporters are rarely interested in product news, but rather in the latest trends in government technology and innovative solutions to the problems plaguing government agencies. Work the angles you have that everyone is – or will be – talking about.

6 Identify and use customer references (if possible)

Customer references are solid gold, but they can be very hard to get. This is especially true in the public sector space, where many customers may wish to avoid the appearance of endorsing a particular vendor. If you have a customer that is willing to speak to the press or allow you to namedrop, use them, because they can help validate your message.

7 Offer additional proof points

Customers are great, but they're not your only option; there are many other ways to validate your company to the press. Analysts, partners, and prime contractors can lend an enormous amount of credibility and help support your messaging.

8 Demonstrate public sector momentum by announcing big wins

Got some great wins in your recent past? Maybe some new technology partners or government certifications? Issue press releases or write news blogs about these wins, and pitch them to reporters.

There is no guarantee that these types of announcements will be covered by the media, but don't underestimate the value and display of expertise of this type of news to your sales force and the prospects they are targeting.



9 Contribute content

Many government-focused publications have downsized their staff in recent years and reporters have less time to pursue stories. As such, editors tend to be very receptive to contributed content. This content must be vendor neutral, high-level, and non-promotional. Consider non-traditional media

outlets as well, such as LinkedIn, to write and publish pieces to get your ideas across.

10 Consider channel publications

There is no shortage of ways to reach your prospective customers. In addition to traditional and social media, many of the biggest government resellers and distributors offer their own blogs or magazines. Look for opportunities here, as these can also be effective vehicles for your stories and messages, particularly if you're targeting the channel.



11 Actively promote your content

Share every published article or blog across your social media channels. Reporters and editors are looking for, and sometimes measured by, reader engagement. Not only will your information reach a broader audience, you'll help the reporters and solidify those valuable relationships.

12 Amplify your messages with marketing campaigns

Beyond creating public sector news hooks from your own surveys and reports, this content can serve an even greater marketing purpose as a sales tool. Data points can be turned into infographics for your

website or social media channels. A series of thought leadership articles can be turned into an ebook. You can continuously repurpose content to create highly effective marketing campaigns.

13 Measure your success

Historically, measuring PR success has presented challenges. Companies love to tie their PR efforts directly back to sales, which can be tough. Thanks to the ability to measure web traffic, inbound leads from content and social media, share of voice, and qualitative comments from customers and partners, measurement has become increasingly achievable.

These data points can help you justify and optimize your public sector PR and marketing investments and measure your public sector PR success.

About Us

Reaching decision makers in the public sector can feel like a completely different sport compared to the private sector.

Taking advantage of PR opportunities unique to government audiences can help your government-centric business thrive.

At REQ, we've been helping our B2G clients conquer the public sector PR challenge for more than 20 years.

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