The initial planning done, it is time to move to the next crucial stage and decide what you are actually going to do. What tactics and initiatives will exert the influence you want? In other words, what methods will you use to contact and convince your target audiences?

Until this stage, it is all too easy to dream about the wonderful campaign, its objectives and likely success. The tough part can be converting the dreams into reality. This is made easier if the early work has been thoroughly carried out, i.e. you have precisely defined your target audiences and identified key media targets. Now all your skills will be needed to think of practical and creative ways of generating the interest of these audiences – and all as part of a progressive campaign plan.

It often helps to jot down lots of ideas of the kinds of activities you want to include, and then list them in order of priority, both in terms of importance and timing. One key driver is to try to make a positive and accurate impact early on and then build on it throughout the implementation of your campaign plan. But be wary of expecting perfection: many campaigns suffer from challenging and hostile reactions at times.
1 Hard news and soft news

Journalists are taught to ask ‘so what?’ whenever someone proposes a story to them or they read a press release. This is because they usually have to promote or ‘sell’ their ideas for a story to their news editor, editor or producer – and that is the question the journalist will have to answer.

This means that a PR practitioner must help the journalist by giving them a good reason to choose the proposed story. To do this, it helps to decide whether you are offering hard or soft news.

**Hard news**

Hard news means something that is new, innovative and likely to be of interest to a wide audience. Of course, the interpretation varies to some degree between media outlets but it usually refers to events such as:

- the launch of something new and relevant to that audience
- a significant change to a service, organisation or leadership.

While you should certainly seek out opportunities to generate hard news coverage for some aspect of your campaign, such as the launch, remember that a high proportion of hard news is negative news. You are likely to inch nearer to achieving your campaign objectives via soft news tactics.

**Soft news**

Soft news tends to be created quite deliberately to generate media coverage and is likely to be a key channel for achieving your goals. The most common devices are:

- surveys or analyses
- facts and figures that reveal interesting and, preferably, unexpected information or trends
- time-related initiatives
- case studies
- expert advice on a specific issue.

**Surveys and analysis**

A cursory scrutiny of the most popular media will reveal an appetite for tactics, which can be summed up in the title of the TV show *8 Out of 10 Cats*. Surveys that are snapped up with enthusiasm often relate to people’s behaviour and significant changes in their preferences, attitudes or habits. Gaining media coverage using survey results is a tactic used by the corporate sector, political parties, trade union and professional bodies, pressure groups and charities. Success depends on having information that can be presented to journalists as saying something new, i.e. it is newsworthy, fresh or interesting. See the case study on the following page for more information.
6.2: Public relations tactics

Case study
An international real estate company wanted to raise awareness of its European credentials. As part of its campaign, it ran an annual survey of top executives, asking them to vote for their favourite European city for doing business in against a list of key criteria, such as internal transport systems and cost of office accommodation. The results included a list of the cities – with changes in their order from year to year. This survey was virtually guaranteed to attract considerable publicity in every city mentioned.

Similarly, analyses that paint a picture of aspects of an issue, attitude or service often present an excellent opportunity to generate media interest. This is best done on a regular basis so that you can compare and contrast the results. For example, there is a fascination with any analysis that reflects changes in property prices in specific locations, ownership versus rentals or types of property and so on.

Facts and figures
You can use well-presented facts and figures as a tactic to attract media attention. Take care to highlight the most interesting aspects and put the findings into context. Try to convert the figures in the case study below into an accessible and readily absorbed format.

Case study
The statistical bulletin entitled ‘Older drivers and road accidents, 2011’ was published on 3 July 2012 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority (www.statistics.gov.uk).

The key points in this bulletin cover the following issues for all older drivers:

• Around 1 in 10 accidents involves a driver aged 70 or older.
• Around 1 in 10 road accident casualties occurs in accidents where at least one driver is aged 70 or older.
• Around 1 in 20 drivers involved in road accidents in Wales is aged 70 or older.
• 617 drivers aged 70 or over were involved in 595 road accidents in 2011.
• 14 of these drivers were involved in fatal accidents, 112 in serious accidents and 491 in slight accidents.
• 6 per cent of the drivers (of known age) were involved in all motorised vehicle accidents.

When working with facts and figures, translate them into a clear and simple document. Visuals such as graphs and photos will help. Provide the sources and fieldwork involved so that the journalists can access this information if they want to verify the findings or check out other findings.
Take great care if the full survey includes some findings that are not welcome or favourable to your campaign. Instead of holding your breath, hoping that no one will turn up the findings, it is wiser to have prepared a ‘line to take’ to answer any questions from journalists.

**Take it further**
Look up the websites of some of the main polling organisations to gain an impression of their surveys, findings, presentation and their clients.

Access [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk) to research the regular and specific information given from the official UK National Statistics authority.

**Time-related tactics**
An exceptionally useful tactic to encourage media and other interest is to link your campaign to a specific time or event. Is it the tenth anniversary of a specific law being introduced? Does it coincide with a national week to raise awareness of a specific issue, such as a health problem? Is it 100 years since an event happened? Various websites will help identify such connections (see the case study below).

**Case study**
A cursory scan through anniversaries listed on the [www.ideas4writers.co.uk](http://www.ideas4writers.co.uk) website reveals:

- September 13: 90 years ago the highest temperature ever recorded (57.7°C) at Al’Aziziyah, Libya
- September 21: 75 years ago JRR Tolkien’s novel *The Hobbit* first published
- September 30: 30 years ago, the TV show *Cheers* was first broadcast in the US

While these are just a few random findings, it may be possible to construct a link between anniversaries like these and your campaign.

**Take it further**
Look up the Date-a-Base Book via [www.ideas4writers.co.uk/date.a.base](http://www.ideas4writers.co.uk/date.a.base)

**Case studies**
PR practitioners often talk about ‘real people’ – by this they usually mean those who are not employed in public relations, the media or running an organisation. They may be customers, clients, victims or service users. Whoever they are, it can make a huge difference if you can identify even a small group who are prepared to be named or interviewed in support of your campaign.

While simple testimonials are useful, case studies are designed to be a much more thorough exercise. These studies could involve interviews, timelines and details of those affected in a campaign, for example:

- Residents facing increases in insurance premiums in flood-affected areas.
- Shoppers backing plans for a new out-of-town shopping centre.
• Elderly people with excellent experience of a new personal safety alarm system.
• Those who have suffered from a specific disease or illness.

Identifying and approaching suitable people takes time and effort – and may not always be possible. But the idea should certainly be considered as part of your planning (see the case study below). Even a cursory study of the media will reveal the appetite for such real-life case histories.

Case study
A charity decided to use graphic and quite shocking photographs as part of its new advertising campaign. Its public relations adviser warned that it was important to have some individuals who could, and would, back up these images by saying 'Yes, if it had not been for the charity, that could have been me'. Initially, the charity insisted that this was not possible because it had to protect the confidentiality of its service users. However, the adviser persevered and found a person involved in one of the charity’s own projects who had previously been a service user and was more than happy to help. The result: interviews on national and regional TV and radio channels, quotes and photographs in newspapers, including a double page spread in one of them.

There are serious ethical considerations to be taken into account in cases such as these. PR practitioners have a responsibility to consider how the experience of being involved in the campaign could affect people who may be vulnerable. It is too easy to arouse the interest of someone, especially when they hear the magic words 'perhaps be interviewed on the television'. It is your job to protect them if they have no idea of the reality of dealing with the media. Nothing gives PR practitioners a bad reputation more than when they are perceived to be exploiting the more vulnerable for their own ends.

Sometimes you may only be asking for a written description of someone’s experiences and views. Usually you will want some sort of visual material to accompany this description. At every step, it is crucial to be honest and realistic.

If a person is likely to be interviewed, much more care needs to be taken. How are they likely to react under such pressure? In reality, most people feel at least a little disappointed or dismayed by the whole experience of being interviewed and then seeing the results. At the very least, media training and rehearsals are needed.

A difficult subject is whether or not you should pay a fee to those involved. The general rule is ‘no’, mainly because the person is likely to have little experience of being interviewed and less understanding about how the media works. In addition, a PR practitioner should live in fear of a journalist asking one of their supporters if they are being paid. However, reasonable expenses, especially for travel, are often offered so that the person concerned is not out of pocket.

Expert advice on a specific issue
At the other end of the soft news spectrum, you could develop a story for your campaign that revolves around specialist or expert knowledge. Obvious examples could involve a well-regarded academic with specific knowledge of your key
issues, or a popular vet promoting an issue involving the care of animals. However, some care needs to be taken (see spokespeople and champions on page 12) to ensure that their opinions and aspirations match those of your organisation and campaign.

It can work well to form a long-standing and symbiotic relationship with an expert or two. But be prepared to answer any questions about their independence: are they totally separate from your organisation? Perhaps they are sponsored by it? Or perhaps they are a trustee or someone holding a similar, non-executive role?

Here, the question of payment is something of a grey area. It is common for organisations to sponsor work by bodies such as universities, research bodies and think tanks. The general rule is to be totally transparent about the relationship and, put more bluntly, never advocate an arrangement that you would not want to see in a newspaper headline.

2 News events

Early in your campaign, you may not have precise details of when various news events will take place. However, it is essential to include a general outline of the kinds of events you are planning, as well as the priorities and likely milestones in your campaign.

The key to running successful news events as part of your public relations campaign is to target with precision and think like the journalists you plan to engage with. There are various formats and tactics to consider incorporating into your campaign including:

- interviews
- press conferences
- press briefings
- photo opportunities
- press trips.

Many campaigns combine several of these. For instance, an animal welfare campaign may involve a press conference, followed by one-to-one interviews, followed by a photo session for television and still photographers with some relevant animals and their handlers. This is a particularly popular scenario with television producers as they can put together a package which includes short elements of all three.

**Interviews**

Arranging interviews will be part of your campaign. They come in a variety of formats, including face to face, over the telephone or electronically, using tools such as email and Twitter. In order to jump-start your campaign, there is a strong argument for trying to arrange an interview of some substance (both in terms of quality and quantity) with a well-known and influential journalist on a media outlet which is precisely targeted at a key audience.
Political activists are often obsessed with the concept of ‘momentum’, believing that once their support starts to move in one direction or another, it is quite hard to change it. As in any campaign, a positive, accurate and noteworthy start gives you a psychological advantage. This is partly because, while journalists will endeavour to hunt down their own exclusives, they also work as part of a herd. In researching a possible story, one of their first steps is to check what has previously been written about an issue or organisation.

Your plan is likely to go a little further and stipulate the targets for first tranche interviews. For example, the announcement of the retirement of a CEO and the appointment of a new one might follow this sequence:

• An in-depth interview of new CEO, resulting in a news feature in business section of national newspaper.
• Similar with senior journalist on specialist publication, but including an interview with outgoing CEO.
• New CEO gives speech on key issue at major conference for the sector.
• Press briefing just before the speech with journalists at conference.
• Interviews after speech on key issue with wider media.

Press conferences

The arguments for holding a press conference are finely balanced. Press conferences alone have less attraction for many journalists as they rarely provide good visual images. They are frequently demanded by journalists when something has gone wrong, such as a serious crime, a political initiative or anything to do with football.

You may consider holding a press conference to launch your campaign, but the first questions to ask are:

• What sort of headline, coverage and visual material do you want to generate?
• What coverage is likely to be generated?

You may also have received a handful of firm assurances that ‘I will be there’, but daily pressures often mean that journalists are diverted to other events at short notice. These will be events that they, their news editors or producers decide are more interesting. While those with little experience of the media may suggest a press conference with great enthusiasm, for PR practitioners, they often equate to sleepless nights and bitten nails.

The circumstances when you should consider a press conference are when you are launching something which the media is likely to greet, universally, as a good news story; and when a person in a position of some note who, preferably, can demonstrate the key issue is present.

Press briefings

An alternative to the conference is to invite a small group of the most relevant journalists to a briefing; often called an around-the-table briefing. This works best if a few basic rules are observed: that the journalists are not in direct competition; and that it is on the record. It is a mistake these days to hold briefings off the record and trust that anything said will not crop up, together with the identity of the speaker, somewhere. Today’s journalists also tend to regard it as pompous.
to state that a briefing is being held under the Chatham House rule, assuming that this protects the identity of the speaker. Your role is to warn your employer or client that anything they say in the vicinity of a journalist is likely to be quoted somewhere at some point.

These warnings apart, briefing sessions can be an excellent way to explain and promote your campaign in a more relaxed and conversational style. In addition to the press release, which will give fairly limited information, it provides the chance to communicate more information, facts and figures and case studies.

**Photo opportunities**

Visual materials are essential to your campaign plan (see communication materials in **Table 6.2.1** on page 11). The importance of having appropriate images to demonstrate and back up your key issue cannot be overestimated. As part of your strategy, it is vital to consider inviting photographers and camera crews to a specific event, possibly connected to the launch of your campaign.

However, a severe health warning needs to be attached to such events. You must provide images that back up the central message of your campaign and are well within the boundaries of an obvious publicity stunt or it can look like a line-up of rather bored-looking people in a dull environment. The potential for these events to turn into PR disasters cannot be exaggerated, as illustrated in the case study below.

**Case study**

- During the 1997 general election campaign, the then Prime Minister, John Major, went to the headquarters of one of the top Formula One racing teams in Surrey. It was designed as a positive photo opportunity, demonstrating a British success story – except no one organising the event had realised that racing cars do not usually have their wheels on when they are not on the racing circuit. Hence, Mr (now Sir John) Major walked into the building amid the customary media scrum to be greeted by the sight of beautiful, tiny racing cars astride trestle tables – and without their wheels.

- During the 2010 general election campaign, the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, unveiled a new poster in west London. However, the coverage of the event was dominated by the startled expressions of him and his colleagues as a car crashed into a bus shelter a few feet away.

There may be a limit to how much control PR practitioners can exercise over such opportunities but the key is:

- to present an obvious link to your key message
- to remember that anyone with a mobile phone can take and distribute pictures at any time
- to plan extremely carefully, preferably with advice
- for someone with the instincts of a tabloid photographer to do a thorough reconnaissance.

Do not neglect agency and freelance photographic and film agencies. Now that many mainstream media outlets have few full-time staff, they increasingly rely on pictures that are bought in.
Press trips

It is tempting to advise against organising a press trip for a small group of journalists, but they do have their place in certain types of campaigns. The more obvious examples are those that promote, or aim to shape, the perception of a certain place, such as a city, holiday or travel destination.

Ideally, you should choose journalists known to you or your colleagues and who have some status on key media targets. Avoid those who are known to be habitually late or who have undesirable personal habits, especially involving alcohol or sexual behaviour.

One form of press trip that may be more appropriate is for a known and respected feature writer to spend some time with an organisation so they can write an article with exceptional in-depth knowledge. Certain conditions are usually set down to draw the line between what can be reported and what must be kept confidential – and what can and cannot be photographed and recorded. This will apply particularly to the identity of vulnerable people or the quoting of junior members of staff.

3 Non-media relations channels

The following common methods of contacting and convincing your target audiences do not involve using the media as a channel of communication:

- publications
- sponsorship
- events
- competitions/giveaways
- corporate social responsibility.

Publications

As part of your campaign, you are very likely to publish suitable materials, both in print and electronic formats. If so, remember that you need to decide early on the most appropriate format and time to distribute because of the time needed to produce them. Issues that may crop up include how big and glossy a publication should be. Sometimes organisations become carried away and produce over-ambitious documents without realising that this could give the wrong impression – especially if the campaign involves appealing for more support and funding. But the general rule is accessibility – be clear, concise, precise and never waver from the key messages.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship deals – in which one organisation pays another organisation or person in return for co-branding, i.e. the inclusion of their name on promotional materials – may be appropriate. These could be seen very obviously in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympics. If your organisation has any long-standing and successful sponsorship arrangements, then it is certainly worth considering extending them into a deal to support your campaign. Clearly there are dangers of association, i.e. if your organisation is associated with a company, product or
service which undergoes a collapse in its reputation. Deals with certain banks came under scrutiny in recent years.

It often works better to attract limited sponsorship for the duration of a campaign from an organisation closely linked to its key objectives. It is necessary to have a clear understanding about what precisely is being sponsored, but sponsored events, for example, are a popular and often highly successful method of promoting your campaign.

**Events**

Planning a range of events throughout your campaign to reach your target audiences directly should be on your checklist of possible tactics. Figure 6.2.1 shows different types of events.

The questions that need to be answered include:
- Will enough people turn up?
- Will the right people turn up?
- Will it have a trickle-down effect, where attendees communicate accurate and positive information about the campaign?

Often it helps to provide some sort of interactive or practical aspect to your event. For example, a pharmaceutical company that ran a stall at the main political party conferences always stole a march on its competitors by having qualified medical staff on hand, measuring attendees’ blood pressure and cholesterol levels. A real estate company might offer attendees a chance to redesign a city centre electronically at its stall in a major exhibition.

**Competitions and giveaways**

Running competitions or offering giveaways may be appropriate for some campaigns, so long as the time and financial costs are carefully evaluated and you are confident that they will influence target audiences. A scattergun approach is never advisable.

**Corporate social responsibility**

Companies now commonly engage in activities that come under the heading of CSR (corporate social responsibility) – often referred to as ‘giving something back to the community’. The best ones involve staff in direct actions to help specific campaigns, charities or community projects.
For instance, a leading bank may help a homeless charity by setting up accounts for those sleeping rough and giving advice on money management. Alternatively, staff from a medium-sized company may spend a weekend painting and repairing a local community centre.

Such partnerships can provide a win-win situation – benefiting both organisations – and could be woven into your campaign plan. But, as with all such initiatives, care needs to be taken to achieve the right match and suitable activities, as demonstrated in the case study below.

**Case study**

A multi-media organisation decided, without proper consultation, to take a minibus of staff to set out an organic vegetable garden on a piece of wasteland in a run-down inner city estate in Scotland. They were immediately pelted with rubbish by residents who regarded the initiative as patronising and invasive.

**4 Other tactics for delivering campaign messages**

In addition to news events and non-media relations channels, you may want to select some or all of the methods or tactics shown in Table 6.2.1 to deliver your campaign message. The role of PR practitioners is to identify the most appropriate materials to use at the most appropriate time during a campaign – while keeping a sharp eye on costs and the work involved in producing them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Brochures/leaflets/newsletters | Print or electronic:  
  • used to attract and influence your target audience or audiences  
  • focus on those at the sharp end of your campaign, such as services users, customers or clients  
  • key messages, case studies, facts and figures and visual materials should dominate  
  • regular newsletter, perhaps delivered electronically, can keep people up to date |
| Press materials                | Print and electronic materials available to journalists at any stage of a campaign:  
  • a basic press release, setting out the rationale of the campaign, key facts and figures, quotes from the most relevant individual/s and contact details  
  • facts and figures analysis, giving more extensive detail of the reasons why you are promoting the campaign and links to more details information  
  • a Q&A posted on the website  
  • visual materials; photographs, graphics and possibly short films, in formats which can be easily accessed and used by different target media |
| CDs/DVDs/YouTube               | Filmed materials:  
  • short, accessible and available in a couple of formats  
  • analyse which format is best for target audiences; perhaps a short film to show on an exhibition stall; or a CD-ROM to be sent directly to a small number of key influencers.  
  • show the file at the launch and/or press conference, then make it available via the campaign’s website  
  Examples of filmed materials are outlined in the case studies on the following page. |
| Exhibition materials           | If relevant, suitable materials for use at an exhibition or conference.  
  While some of the materials in the rows above should be fine to use, it is crucial to analyse the audiences who are likely to attend and what is most appropriate for them. |
When producing these materials, the first essential is that the messages are the same – although they may be expressed slightly differently, depending on your audience. If you are armed with good testimonials or examples, plus relevant facts and figures, it becomes easier to adapt these to the different formats shown in Table 6.2.1.

The second essential is to encourage and provide a system for feedback, so that those in receipt of any materials can communicate their reactions and views to the campaign team. This can be a really useful way to gauge attitudes to your efforts and also to add to your contacts database.

**Case study**

- A leading homeless charity produced a 4-minute CD-ROM featuring a former client who had been sleeping rough. It traced his journey, with help from the charity, to come off the streets, find a home and gain a new qualification.
- A company going through a global merger produced a 4-minute film to show to staff. It featured the two leading executives talking to them and each other about the rationale of the merger and what it would mean for their combined organisations, their work and the staff.
- A company promoting its corporate social responsibility work produced a short film showing its work, involving staff at very different levels, in supporting and helping develop IT skills in schools in three African countries.

### 5 Selecting spokespeople and champions

Selecting the right people to be the public face and voice of your campaign can be a key tactic in the success of your campaign. It can be a sensitive issue – sensitive because it is not always wise to pick the most senior person to dominate that role. It is a common mistake to believe that youthful good looks and a certain flamboyance will be most persuasive. The trick is to match your spokesperson to your audience.

There is also a balance to be struck between choosing someone well versed in every aspect of the campaign and another who takes a macro view. The best and safest option is to identify a small range of spokespeople who can communicate best with your identified audiences, who are well versed and rehearsed in all the key aspects of the campaign and who have been given enough training to deal with presenting and responding to questions from any media or other interrogators.

There is a strong argument to appoint a campaign leader, that is, the figurehead of the campaign. Ideally, this person would be accustomed to being interviewed and have a good relationship with target media. This will make your task much easier as the media – especially television channels – are likely to be far more willing to interview someone they already know or have seen on the media.

Sadly – and there is no nice way of expressing this – there are some CEOs or heads of organisations who should never be interviewed by a journalist, especially not
Unit 6: Understanding public relations campaign planning

6.2: Public relations tactics

on television. This can present a particular challenge for a PR practitioner if the person insists on taking on the key spokesperson role. With support and training, they are likely to improve. But if you identify others, perhaps with specific frontline experience or expertise in the campaign issue, you can suggest that they are also involved in communicating with target audiences.

Good spokespeople can be found in odd places. The deputy head of research, who can talk about the campaign and the facts and figures in a memorable and persuasive way, may prove to be a star. The young man who visits and supports a group of vulnerable people, and so sees and hears their experiences at first hand, may also influence one of your target audiences. Such people can be part of your team of champions or ambassadors – able to reach parts of your audiences that others cannot reach.

There may also be experts in your sector who are prepared to back your campaign publicly and eloquently. Such people will be accustomed to being interviewed because they are known to have specific expertise on an issue or subject. While it is wonderful when such people are willing to publicly back your campaign, it can present you with a dilemma. Given their knowledge, they are frequently reluctant to take advice from PR practitioners and may go ‘off message’.

‘Celeb endorsement’ can also be fraught with pitfalls. Many an organisation has been stung by welcoming support from someone who regularly features in the media, usually in diaries or on the entertainment or sports pages, only for that person to be ‘discovered’ doing something inappropriate. It helps if the celebrity concerned has actually done something worthwhile and, most importantly, something that links in with your campaign objectives.

An example of a successful celebrity spokesperson is Joanna Lumley, who campaigned on behalf of the Gurkhas. Her father’s life was saved by a Gurkha and this personal experience gave her a unique platform from which to speak.

6 Resources

Resource planning and management is important in the development and success of your campaign. The resources you will have at your disposal are:

• time
• money
• the campaign team
• external suppliers.

A successful campaign plan will set out how time and budget will be balanced to achieve the campaign objectives to a particular quality.

The campaign plan will set out how resources will be managed by:

• detailing schedules that show key milestones and interim dates
• showing activity lists that cover all the parts of a campaign to be completed
• identifying critical tasks and the contingent activities
• allocating staff and time to activities, e.g. the creation of materials or organisation of events

Take it further
Look up the interview with the head of the British Dental Association on YouTube. Evaluate it and justify your opinions.

Take it further
On television or online, watch a small sample of key spokespeople promoting their campaigns and jot down:

• your first impression
• what you think their key message is
• how persuasive you found them
• any ideas for improvement.

An example of a successful celebrity spokesperson is Joanna Lumley, who campaigned on behalf of the Gurkhas. Her father’s life was saved by a Gurkha and this personal experience gave her a unique platform from which to speak.
• setting budgets for each activity and giving guidance for how costs will be monitored
• identifying opportunities to outsource work if budget allows, e.g. printing or photography.

**Time as a resource**

Most PR consultants are accustomed to filling in timesheets on a regular basis, detailing exactly how they have divided up their working day between:
• working for existing clients
• identifying and pursuing potential new clients
• networking
• administrative tasks.

To plan how time, as a resource, will be managed during the campaign you need to calculate the time that specific tasks will take for each member of the campaign team. You also need to indicate how the amount of time may vary at different stages. A detailed schedule tied to staff allocation will help you identify time-intensive periods. The case study below demonstrates this.

**Case study**

A trade union has a communication team of ten people. At the launch of a campaign, eight and a half people devote themselves entirely to promoting it, while one and a half members of staff deal with unrelated enquiries and issues. The time involved decreases over the next three months, by which time three people are still working full-time on the campaign, while the other team members are dealing with other issues. Nine months later, the campaign is reignited to coincide with the main political party conferences and certain public service conferences and so, again, at least eight members of the team are working almost full-time on the campaign.

**Money as a resource**

It is essential for PR practitioners to factor in realistic costs for campaign tactics and processes, as no financial manager likes being asked to settle unexpected bills.

Costs to consider when planning a campaign include:
• print materials
• website construction
• video production
• photography
• travel
• event hosting.

Ideally, your organisation will already have well-established and long-standing relationships with suppliers. If not, get quotes from a range of suppliers and assume that the longer the time given for preparation and production, the cheaper the cost; the shorter the time between your order and the delivery date, the higher the cost.
The campaign team as a resource

The skills of your campaign team can be viewed as a resource. Ideally, a well-planned and implemented campaign is likely to involve a wide range of public relations skills, including:

- analytical skills to identify a suitable issue
- research skills to collate the necessary information
- planning skills to build up a detailed campaign plan
- team working skills to exploit your own and others’ abilities
- networking skills to identify and exploit appropriate contacts
- creative skills to dream up innovative ways to attract attention
- the objectivity to see your organisation or issue as other audiences may see it
- the confidence to react quickly and effectively when your detailed campaign plan is under threat.

A campaign manager will devote most, if not all, of their time to the development and implementation of the plan. The campaign manager will need help to identify and perform a range of activities, including:

- dealing with the media
- dealing with other audiences
- carrying out research and monitoring
- organising events
- handling the administration.

It is crucial to analyse and communicate the demands of conducting the campaign on staff resources. Ask yourself:

- Do we have enough people to carry out all these functions?
- Should we bring someone else in to help, possibly on a freelance or temporary basis?
- What impact will it have on our ability to work for other clients (if an agency) or achieve the other objectives of our organisation (if in-house)?

To achieve the identified activities the right staff need to be assigned to each one. Consider a mix of those with previous experience of similar campaigns and those who are likely to bring something new to the campaign. This need not be as arduous or intensive an exercise as it may appear as, hopefully, you will be surrounded by possible candidates for the various roles. It is also worth remembering – especially if you are approached for one of these roles – that involvement in a campaign is not only a wonderful opportunity but also something that could take pride of place on a CV.

If some of the activities you identify in the campaign plan cannot be resourced by the campaign team due to a shortage of time or skills, you may need to look for external suppliers as a resource. One of the great advantages of working in public relations is the scope for employing freelance suppliers or members of other teams to pick up this work. For instance, is there someone who has a great track record, has good contacts from a campaign that could complement yours – and whom you know is available?

Activity

Your organisation is planning a campaign, which includes producing a small campaign guide for a direct mailshot to a target audience. It will then be posted on the website. Look up online the options and likely costs and the time involved in producing it.
When looking at how you use the campaign team as a resource, you need to identify:

- where the buck stops; i.e. who has overall responsibility for delivering the campaign
- which functions need to be conducted
- the hierarchy; indicating who reports to whom
- what the likely time and workload implications are.

An example of an organogram for a campaign may look like the one shown in Figure 6.2.2.

**Figure 6.2.2: An example of a campaign organogram**

---

**Professional profile**

Jane Smith is a press officer for a leading public services trade union. She is part of a team of 32 involved in communications and campaigning; 17 are based in the London HQ (as she is) while the others work out of offices in Birmingham, Manchester, Cardiff and Southampton. Her main roles are to: help prepare materials to be given to the media and posted on the website; deal with media enquiries; organise events such as press conferences, photo opportunities, briefings and interviews. She also has a role in media monitoring and preparing lines to react to topical stories.

Jane has recently begun attending in-house meetings to discuss campaigning and lobbying initiatives. She has welcomed this involvement, and has volunteered to draft the action points from these meetings, which has led to her participation in other aspects of campaign planning. In particular, she uses her knowledge of key media targets and social media to suggest a wider range of outlets.

To date, she has not been involved in making presentations to in-house or external audiences, but she hopes this will be one of the next steps in her development.

In preparation, she is working on a presentation for colleagues from the union’s various offices about ways to use new and social media to communicate their messages.
Portfolio activity

Following on from the previous Portfolio activity in Topic Guide 6.1, page 18, and focusing on the same campaign, address the following points in your presentation or report.

1. Analyse how the audience, media and primary message were determined for the public relations campaign. Where possible, relate these back to the objectives of the campaign to demonstrate the way the campaign’s focus is developed.

2. Analyse the selection of tactics used for the public relations campaign, assessing how the tactics used address the audience for the campaign and carry the campaign’s message through the range of media targeted for the campaign.

3. Explain how resources were allocated for the campaign, including considerations around the amount of time allocated to working on the campaign, how the campaign was scheduled and how the financial aspects of the campaign were managed.

Further reading

Books


Websites

The Financial Times www.ft.com
Economist Conferences www.economistconferences.co.uk
The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) www.cbi.org.uk
Conference Alerts www.conferencealerts.com
International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) www.amecorg.com
Chartered Institute of Public Relations www.cipr.co.uk
Public Relations Consultants Association www.prca.org.uk