**Lecture # 4**

[**What’s the difference between having a PR department and hiring a PR firm?**](http://www.axiapr.com/blog/whats-the-difference-between-having-a-pr-department-and-hiring-a-pr-firm)

PR is PR, right? So what are the benefits and drawbacks of each one?

In today’s world, public relations is essential to a company’s success. As a CEO or other company executive, you may wonder whether it's better to have a PR department or to hire an outside firm.

**What are the benefits you receive from having in-house PR?**

**Knowledge of your industry and business.** The first, most obvious benefit is that a PR department is well-versed in your industry and has in-depth knowledge and experience in working with you and your team.

**Only one client – you**. Your in-house PR team is solely dedicated to working on exactly what you need, whenever you need it. This can, however, also be a disadvantage as your PR team answers to many departments within your company.

**What are the benefits you receive from using an outside PR firm?**

**Unbiased opinions.** Sometimes it’s more helpful to have an outsider’s perspective. An independent agency will give you unbiased, objective advice.

**A variety of experiences.** While your PR firm may not be physically located within the same four walls – and has other clients to serve – it also has experience and knowledge about different kinds of projects and circumstances. Whenever anything comes up, odds are, your PR agents have seen it before and know how to take care of it. This is the kind of experience you can only get from a seasoned agency.

**A hand in a crisis.** When a crisis hits, those closest to the situation may act overly emotional or not have the knowledge needed to handle it adeptly. A PR firm is equipped to handle the media in a crisis situation, including having a crisis PR plan ready to put into motion.

**Other things to consider:**

**Limited staff.** An in-house PR department is often small in number. They’re pulled in many directions and may feel overwhelmed.

**Trends.** PR firms are typically on the cutting edge of new trends to ensure their clients receive the best, most innovative service.

**Measurement.** For PR firms, measurement is a key part of showing a return on investment. For in-house departments, finding the best measurement tools and presentation can be costly and may not be a priority.

**Why hire a PR firm?**

Because PR firms enjoy established relationships with journalists and news outlets, they offer connections, contacts and interviews you wouldn’t otherwise have. Often an in-house PR person is spamming the media with items, which is a turnoff to reporters. If media relations is your problem, an agency is your answer.

Additionally, having the objectivity of an outside party helps you and your in-house PR team make informed and objective business and communications decisions.

Most agencies have seen it all. If you have a communications issue, a product or service launching or even just want more media coverage, a reputable PR firm has already successfully executed these services for other companies. And, if you find yourself in a crisis, you’ll definitely want to find an outside firm experienced in that type of communication.

Ideally, a company should try to combine both types of PR support. Many major companies, such as Coca-Cola or Delta, hire outside firms to work on specific campaigns or keep a PR firm on retainer. By having in-house and an agency, you give yourself the best of both worlds. Each team can divide and conquer so your brand stands out to your consumers.