



## **The FrontLine Guide to a Career in PR**

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### About the PRCA

The Public Relations Consultants Association is the voice of public relations consultancies in the UK. The trade association was set up in 1969. It has over 150 members based at over 160 offices throughout the UK. These consultancies are of all sizes, working for clients in all business sectors. Together they employ around 5,000 people and generate more than £400 million in each year in fees from clients.

The PRCA exists to help members be a better business and demonstrate the value of public relations consultancy. But the PRCA isn't just interested in consultancy bosses: its active FrontLine arm represents the interests of the thousands of people working in consultancies up to and including Account Manager level. The PRCA FrontLine Awards scheme is the only one of its kind dedicated to recognising and rewarding the industry's front line.

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# Introduction



## **Francis Ingham, Director General and Managing Director, PRCA**

There has never been a better time to work in public relations. Ours is a vibrant, growing profession, rewarding hard work and encouraging ambition. Each and every piece of independent research shows that our industry has grown enormously in the past, and is set for even greater things in the future.

The reason why PR is a growing and popular expertise is simple – decision-makers increasingly recognise that it is absolutely central to their organisation's future. Put simply, organisations that take care of their PR prosper; those that ignore it falter.

That growing recognition explains why so many PR professionals provide counsel at the very highest level; whether to businesses, charities or governments. Why they are well-paid and well-respected. And what is true of PR in general is doubly so for consultancies. Our members represent the intellectual powerhouse of the profession. They create an exceptional number of the creative ideas that drive PR. And that means they seek out the clear thinkers; the innovative; and the bold.

In its openness, PR is unparalleled. It is a genuine democracy of talent, where background is irrelevant, and ability is all. Who wouldn't want to be part of it? Of course, if you don't fancy an exciting career, you could always become an accountant instead!

## **Ajay Teli, FrontLine Chairman**

The PR industry is growing fast and furiously, and it has never been so exciting. This new guide will give you a true insight into the world of PR, where to find information and how to get your foot in the door.

It's the FrontLine Executive's job to ensure that everyone from Account Director below is kept up-to-date with current news, issues and tools to help with their career development, and to encourage all PR consultants to achieve the very best.

If you're thinking about joining the industry, now is the best time. Online and digital are on the up and the growth of new tools and opportunities are endless. We are shaping the future of PR and adding value every day. Be part of a challenging and rewarding industry and let your career flourish.

## **Natasha Woolsey, FrontLine Manager**

Welcome to The FrontLine Guide to a Career in PR. This is the eighth in a series of survival guides to educate and inform new and prospective public relations practitioners about the requirements of working in public relations.

FrontLine is a PRCA initiative that addresses the interests of the thousands of people working in consultancies at entry level and up to Account Director level. The FrontLine Executive has doubled in size since 2007 with increased relevance and activity, helping to ensure that PRCA member benefits reach the whole spectrum of employees in consultancies.

Thank you to the FrontLine Executive Survival Working Group and to all the member consultancies that helped to produce this guide with their top tips and invaluable knowledge: Golley Slater Public Relations, Unity PR, Mischief PR, Good Relations, Broadgate, Hill & Knowlton, Shine Communications, Eulogy!, Cow and Nelson Bostock Communications.

## Chapter 1:

# What is PR?

**PR uses the editorial space within print publications, websites, television and radio shows to communicate a brand's messages...**

## PR within the marketing mix

There are many ways for brands and organisations to communicate with their target audience, whether they are aiming to try and sell more products or services, or to get them to think a different way about the brand. They could send out a letter (direct mail), put an advert on TV (advertising), tempt them with a free sample at the supermarket (promotions) or try and meet them at an event (experiential). These are just a few examples of different types of marketing, and PR is another element within the marketing mix that brands can use to talk to their target audience.

## So what's the difference between PR and advertising?

Advertising uses paid-for media, such as billboards, TV, newspapers or online banner space, to communicate a brand's messages. PR uses the editorial space within print publications, websites, television and radio shows to communicate a brand's messages, so involves influencing journalists and reporters.

Put simply, in a newspaper the adverts are bought by a brand where they can say pretty much whatever they want to the readers. An article within the same paper can't be bought by a company, but it might have been influenced by a PR consultant.

For example, they might have given the journalist some important company news, or suggested the idea for a feature article based on a piece of research. There are a number of ways that PR consultants can influence the media in order to convey their client's or organisation's messages: the campaigns in chapter six of this guide provide some good examples.

## What are the key differences between in-house and consultancy roles?

An in-house PR department works for an organisation exclusively, originating and implementing a PR programme geared to its management's requirements. So an in-house PR person needs to have expert, in-depth knowledge of the particular market they are working in.

PR consultancies work from a wider base of experience and expertise pooled by its members. Consultancies provide an independent service to several client organisations, often working within very different market sectors.

If you're looking for a career in PR, consultancies are a good place to start, as they allow you to quickly gain experience across a range of clients and market sectors. This guide is an introduction to consultancy life and what a career in PR can offer you.

## Chapter 2:

# Is PR the right career for me?

## The PR personality

Consultancies are usually jam-packed with a diverse range of people who all bring different skills to the table whether it is their creative thinking, media contacts or client servicing skills. However, if you are someone who likes routine and wants to be out of the office on time every day without fail, PR may not be the right job for you.

A successful PR consultant is prepared to take risks and is constantly searching for new innovative and creative ways to give their clients access to the media. Ultimately if you are passionate about your clients and the campaigns you are working on, these campaigns will become the success stories that are revered and remembered by the rest of the industry.

## PR Skills

To succeed in PR you need to have a number of skills in very different areas:

- **Communications:** Your communications skills, both written and verbal, must be exemplary. You will be writing a variety of communications materials, such as press releases, reports and features. You will also need to pitch your ideas to busy journalists over the phone or to your clients in a presentation.
- **Organised:** PR consultants often have a number of clients in their portfolio. You must be able to manage your time well and multi-task in order to keep several accounts and projects running well at all times.
- **Flexible:** Your clients may work across many different sectors, and you will need to keep switching your focus between them throughout the day. You will also need to be adaptable with regards to working hours; if it makes more sense to meet a journalist in the evening, then that's when you'll need to go! PR is rarely a 9-to-5 job.
- **Creative:** Finding the right hook to get your client into their target media can be tricky. You will need to be able to think creatively and come up with ideas that inspire your team, your clients and of course, the media.

- **A cool head:** PR is unpredictable and situations can develop suddenly that require immediate action. You need to be someone who responds well to tight deadlines and can keep a cool head when the pressure hits.
- **Hard-working:** Hours can be long and clients can be demanding; you need to be someone who can really get their head down and focus.
- **Sociable:** But it's not all work and no play. The best way to build relationships with clients and journalists is often out of the office, in a social setting. You need to be someone who finds it easy to get along with people you don't know and make conversation. Building up a network of contacts is vital if you want to excel in this profession.

If you are still eager to join the industry after reading this honest portrayal, then PR just might be the career for you!

### The PR consultancy culture

To define the PR consultancy culture with one broad brushstroke is inevitably a difficult task. As with all companies in one industry sector, PR consultancies differ depending on their genre and focus. However, it is safe to say that certain attributes are overarching.

PR consultancies tend to have a fast-paced atmosphere and work ethic and require you, as a PR consultant, to think on your feet and use your initiative. The ability to spot relevant opportunities will stand you in good stead throughout your career, as will strong time-management skills and the ability to multi task.

Consultancies, especially within the consumer sector, tend to be a hub of noise and excitement. Throughout the day there is constant activity with phones ringing, top news stories being streamed on screens, creative brainstorming taking place, constant pitching to the media and people diving in and out of the office for meetings. Generally no one day is ever the same!

## The consultancy ladder

### • Junior Account Executive:

A role requiring little experience, Junior Account Executives are responsible for administration and rarely have a client-facing role, though they may build up to this as they near promotion to the next level.

### • Account Executive:

(average salary £19,800)\*

The entry point for most graduates, Account Executives are expected to do the majority of the day-to-day work on an account such as media sell-ins, feature writing, sorting press clippings and compiling press packs. It is at this stage that individuals start to build up their contacts, particularly with journalists.

### • Senior Account Executive:

The Senior Account Executive takes on more responsibility, often acting as Account Manager on smaller accounts to gain managerial experience.

### • Account Manager:

(average salary £27,800)

The Account Manager's overall responsibility is to ensure that results are delivered. He or she oversees the workload of the team and must be able to spot potential danger points on the account.

### • Senior Account Manager:

(average salary £36,000)

The Senior Account Manager role is related to the Senior Account Executive role, in that it is a transition to the next level. Senior Account Managers will begin to take on responsibility for directing accounts in a mentored environment as they progress upwards.

### • Account Director

(average salary £39,300)

The responsibility of the Account Director is to manage the relationship with the client and ensure best performance is achieved for both client and consultancy. The Account Director oversees client work at a high-level – day-to-day running of the account is left to the Account Manager. Directors are often involved in generating new business for the consultancy as well as being responsible for coaching the team.

- From here you can become a **Director** (average salary £75,800), **Board Member**, **Managing Director**, **Chairman** or **CEO** (average salary £101,500) – the sky's the limit!

*\*Average salary data taken from the PRWeek Salary Survey 2008*

## Am I right for PR?

### Questions:

#### 1. When you read a newspaper, which page do you look at first?

- a. The celebrity gossip pages.
- b. The front page.
- c. The Sudoku.

#### 2. How do you feel when you are introduced to new people?

- a. It depends on what they're wearing and how they look.
- b. Interested – you want to find out all about them and whether you have anything in common.
- c. Shy – you make your excuses and leave as soon as possible.

#### 3. When you were at school, how did you get your homework done?

- a. I'd forget all about it until the day before, then do as rushed job at the last minute.
- b. I'd work out how long I had to work on it, so I could make time to have a final check before handing it in.
- c. I'd worry about it so much I'd be up all night the night before re-writing it over and over.

#### 4. When organising your personal life, which best describes you?

- a. I'm the party planner and everyone follows my lead – we do what I want.
- b. I like to be able to plan ahead but I don't mind a last minute change, I'm happy to go with the flow.
- c. I know what I'm doing in six weeks time – it's all on my year ahead planner.

#### 5. You've been asked to come up with an idea for a play for a local school or community project, how do you react?

- a. You're happy to come up with a few ideas, but haven't got time to help put the play together.
- b. You get a few of your friends together and talk through your ideas with them – you like to get other people's opinions.
- c. You don't really like doing stuff like this – you always think your ideas won't be good enough.

### Answers:

**Mostly As** – You probably have the wrong perception of what it's like to work in a PR consultancy. It's not really about long lunches and lots of booze. It's not about self-promotion either. Go back to the pub and have a re-think.

**Mostly Bs** – You are the ideal PR consultant. You're not afraid to work hard and you can handle the pressure. You like working in teams and are confident about what you do. Go straight to the next chapter.

**Mostly Cs** – You lack creativity and confidence. You're afraid to try and new ideas and like to keep yourself to yourself. Go back to your careers advisor.



Chapter 3:

## How do I get into PR?

**The PR industry attracts people from lots of different backgrounds, ranging from management and marketing to engineering...**

### **Do I need a PR degree?**

Definitely not. The PR industry attracts people from lots of different backgrounds, ranging from management and marketing to engineering. If you want to specialise in a certain field of PR then it helps to have a related degree, but the most important thing is to have a good degree and an excellent academic record.

However, PR degrees can offer useful on-the-job experience a part of the course, which will stand in you in good stead when looking for your first role. (For a full list of PR degrees turn to chapter eight.)

During your time at University try to do something relevant in your spare time, such as writing reviews for the student paper, or organising events and local radio promotions.

### **Background research**

Before you start applying for work experience or jobs aim to do the following:

- Know what type of PR you want to get into e.g. Celebrity, Consumer, Entertainment, Financial, B2B (see chapter four for more information on PR disciplines).
- Look for companies with graduate schemes, especially if your previous experience is limited.



- Get a feel for the industry by reading trade publications like PRWeek, Marketing Week, Marketing, Campaign and The Economist.
- Learn your media – broadcast, print, online – all of it. Read different newspapers every weekend and learn each section, familiarise yourself with journalists and their specialities.
- Make sure you know how PR and other marketing functions fit into the bigger picture of business goals.
- Network – find out if any of your friends or family have contacts in the PR world and make the most of them.

### Work Experience

Having some previous experience in the world of PR can give you an advantage amongst other candidates in interview situations. You should be prepared to do work experience and take low-paid junior roles in order to break into PR.

When you're on a work experience placement:

- Always be proactive, helpful and enthusiastic... even when faced with the most mundane of tasks.
- Ask senior colleagues to look at your CV and covering letter and give you brutal feedback.

### Job applications

Before you apply for a role:

- Research your potential employer and tailor the covering letter accordingly to show how much you want to work for that company.
- Keep your CV to the point, don't waffle.
- Highlight interesting skills and hobbies you have outside of work on your CV to show your personality.
- Think about how each of your jobs has helped you develop core skills for the PR industry – list these as summarised bullets giving examples where possible. List your prime responsibilities and the tasks that you undertook to help achieve your goals.
- Proof your CV for spelling and grammar mistakes and ask a friend to read it over and give you feedback.

### Interviews

Make sure you know what PR entails when you go for an interview. It's not all long lunches and parties and it's important to know how it differentiates from marketing and advertising. Be hungry for the job and show the interviewer that you deserve the job more than anyone else.



Chapter 4:

## The different PR disciplines

**PR jobs vary dramatically depending which kind of discipline you work in. Here is a quick guide to the most common specialisations in PR...**

### Financial PR

Financial PR aims to maximise shareholder value, enhance and protect reputations, and influence the business and legal sectors in which clients operate. Financial PR consultants need to have an intimate knowledge of a client's business goals, specifically in relation to their shareholders and competitors; this is usually accumulated with training and experience. As with other areas of PR, seeking coverage is highly competitive, with companies continually looking to promote beneficial progressions whilst keeping losses away from the press. If you have keen interests in business and finance, this is probably the most suitable PR discipline for you.

### Consumer PR

Consumer PR speaks directly to your target audience – the public! The goal is to manage the reputation and perception of the brand you are working with by effectively communicating key messages. Consumer PR targets the mainstream media with the challenge being to create positive mentions of your brand, whether it's print, broadcast or online media.

## A day in the life...



**Samantha Henry,**  
**Senior Account Executive,**  
**Brave PR**

**9.00:** Every day we read our allotted national newspapers to look for any client coverage, competitor coverage, articles of interest to our clients and examples of great PR campaigns. This week I am reading The Daily Telegraph.

**10.00:** The first meeting of the day is an internal catch-up. I update the rest of the team on journalist press requests I've received for our client, and how my research for a project is progressing.

**10.30:** After researching the design, print and research costs for a media drop campaign I draft a proposal for my client, including a list of media we want to target.

**11.30:** I make a few calls to celebrity agents to research and negotiate costs for appearing at a media day, before sending recommendations to my client.

**12.30:** Results come through from a research company we have been working with.

I pull out the strongest stats to include in our press release and send my suggestions to my Account Director.

**13.30:** After getting a first draft of the release finished I sit down to talk it through with my Account Manager. I make a few amends then give a copy to my Account Director for final approval before sending to the client.

**15.00:** I return a call from a journalist who called while I was working on the press release. He urgently needs product images and details for a feature and the deadline is 16.00 today, an hour away. I quickly research which products are relevant and email across everything he needs.

**15.30:** Join in a quick company brainstorm to contribute suggestions for a new business pitch.

**16.00:** More fee negotiating, this time with an expert who will act as a spokesperson for my client.

**17.00:** I update our budget estimator spreadsheet, which allows my client to keep track of the total budget spent on their project to date.

**17.30:** Just have time to update my coverage log with all the latest coverage before heading home.

### B2B PR

Business-to-Business (B2B) PR involves promoting the products or services of a client whose customers are other businesses. B2B PR consultancies are often employed by blue-chip, infrastructure and IT companies and aim to increase the profits of their clients by promoting and enhancing their reputation amongst their target customers – other businesses.

## A day in the life...



**Rohan Srinivasan,  
Account Manager,  
Eulogy!**

**7.15:** Alarm rings and I'm out of bed in a shot. I always put on BBC Breakfast in the background as I'm getting ready to give me an idea of what the main stories are that day. I never miss the weather forecast and travel update, it's crucial for us Londoners!

**8.00:** The tube journey into work is hot and busy – the only saving grace is the Metro which I scan everyday for stories that are relevant to my accounts. My horoscope looks good... it's going to be a good day!

**8.30:** At my desk I run through my emails and start to plan my day. Read my paper (this week I'm on The Mirror) and flag up issues relating to any of our clients.

**9.00:** We hold internal team meetings for each account regularly and today I have three. We go through all our individual actions and chart which opportunities need to be pursued and prioritised.

It's a good way to start the day, as it helps all of us to chart our workloads for the next few days. These meetings also give me the opportunity to catch up with my Account Director to make sure we are delivering our agreed targets.

**10.30:** Phone time! I'm looking to place an exclusive for one of my clients in the national papers and this is generally the best time to catch a journalist.

**11.30:** Out to a client update meeting with the team. It's an agency rule to have at least one face-to-face client meeting once a month. We update the client on all the previous month's activity, opportunities we're currently pursuing and a detailed update on key journalist meetings that we've set up. I can see a positive outcome as the meeting draws to a close at lunch.

**13.00:** The team heads back to the office, I stop at Marks & Spencer on the way back to pick up a sandwich. When I get back to my desk I review my emails. There doesn't seem to be any emergencies – at least for the time being.

**14.00:** Good news – I get an email confirming that the journalist is going to run the exclusive at the end of the week! I call my client and set up an interview time for him.

With the exclusive in the bag, I assemble the team together for a quick meeting to investigate any potential broadcast opportunities. Each team member goes away with a list of avenues to explore.

**15.00:** I start to get email updates from the team. They've done a sterling job and it's looking promising, both BBC Radio 2 and ITV are interested. I send a quick email update to my client.

**16.00:** Start drafting a comment piece for one of my clients. It's 1500 words but luckily I have a few days before deadline. In between, I field calls from clients and reply to pending emails.

**17.00:** It's been a productive day – the whole team has done a fantastic job. I'm looking forward to spending a relaxing evening at home. Before I leave, my mind is already turning to tomorrow. I update my list of things to do, check my emails for the last time, then switch off!

### Public Affairs

Public Affairs professionals, or lobbyists, work on behalf of clients from all aspects of public and voluntary business sectors with the aim of influencing attitudes and opinions or driving legislative changes. The role of the lobbyist varies vastly from client to client; from business threats to current social issues, lobbyists work to improve clients' relationships with politicians, civil servants, the media or the local community.

This can mean creating a hard-hitting campaign that generates positive talkability, or keeping a client out of the headlines and media spotlight to protect their reputation. A background in politics can be advantageous, as can previous work in social policy. Like any aspect of PR, strong people skills are essential as networking is a fundamental part of the role of the lobbyist.

### Healthcare PR

This PR sector specialises in public and private healthcare provision, including leisure, health, the effect of drugs and impacts of medical research. Healthcare PR aims to provide high profile campaigns for a broad range of clinical clients and therapy areas, and involves interpreting clinical and scientific data to develop tailored programmes that inform, educate and raise awareness of healthcare issues.

This form of PR targets specialised clinical and medical publications, as well as publicising scientific and medical initiatives within the wider national and regional media. A career in Healthcare PR can be very compatible for those with a clinical understanding or qualification.

### Integrated consultancies

The appeal of integrated consultancies undoubtedly lies in their versatility. Integrated consultancies are multi-disciplined, and use a range of communication methods to relay their message to the consumer. This can involve digital and guerrilla PR, stunts, events organisation and direct mail. They also often deal with design and the creative aspect of communications. Integrated consultancies tend to be able to streamline their campaigns as they deal with all aspects of communication strategies, rather than employing a number of external consultancies or suppliers.

In many cases, this helps to result in a more cohesive campaign. Integrated consultancies are perfect for those who relish a diverse career and have strengths in a multitude of disciplines. Those who work in integrated marketing originate from a wide range of different backgrounds, from marketing to talent and event management.

Based on different industries, you also find practices such as Technology PR, Fashion PR, Sport PR, Celebrity PR, Travel PR, Entertainment PR and more recently Ethical and Environmental PR.

## A day in the life...



**Amber Bradbury,**  
**Account Director,**  
**Ketchum Healthcare**

**7.15:** Step onto the train feeling slightly bleary eyed and clutching a copy of the day's newspapers to have a flick through. I like to scan for any stories that are of relevance to my accounts but obviously there is always time to indulge in a bit of the latest celebrity gossip!

**8.30:** Plot out the team's (and my own) actions for the day. Best to do this on the train so that I am all ready to go once I get in the office.

**9.00:** Arrive at work and pass on any relevant news stories that I have found. My Managing Director is particularly pleased with a piece that I found about a new drug to come to market – she's on the phone within five minutes to see if this could be a potential new business lead!

**9.15:** Hold a team meeting to discuss the team's actions for the week. During these meetings, I ensure all of the account projects are on track and that everybody has a manageable workload.

**10.30:** Attend a new business meeting. I'm starting to get more involved in the strategic and planning side of the business now and working on this pitch is giving me lots of opportunities to broaden my skill set.

**11.30:** A team member has spotted a piece of controversial coverage concerning one of the products we work on. After alerting my Associate Director and recommending a plan of action to the client, I reconvene the team to brief them on the new actions required.

**12.15:** I check in with my Associate Director to let her know the latest on our client's issue. She's happy with my recommendations to the client and tells me to holler if I need any help.

**13.00:** Take a few minutes to grab some lunch and call my other half before returning to my desk, reviewing emails that have come in since I have been away and commence drafting some of the more complex of the issues management materials (the team is helping to produce the rest).

**14.00:** The team starts forwarding first drafts of their materials over to me for review. I lock myself in a meeting room so that I can review the drafts without any distractions before feeding back to the team on their work.

**15.30:** All materials have been reviewed, amended and proofed and I breathe a sigh of relief when hitting the send button. The client calls immediately to thank the team for spotting the issue and turning the materials round so quickly.

**16.00:** Time for some creativity! I take the facilitators role in a brainstorm session to help us think of some new tactics for my other account. Tomorrow morning, in partnership with my Associate Director, I will be pulling all the ideas together into a strategic plan of action.

**17.00:** The team has done a fantastic job so I treat them all to tea and cakes to thank them for their hard work before heading off home for a relaxing evening!

## Chapter 5:

# On-the-job advice

**So you've landed your first PR job and you're on your way to your first day in work. But what do you do when you get there? Here are some quick tips on the kinds of tasks you might be given to do in your first role...**

### Press releases

When PR professionals start their career, a press release is often the first thing they are asked to draft. It is also one of the most important written documents in PR to get right. The facts and messaging must be accurate, the tone must be appropriate for the recipient, and the content must be compelling and relevant for the target publication.

The key to writing a good press release is clarity of thought: clear thinking leads to clear writing. Unclear briefs and mountains of messaging can cause confusion. Ignore marketing fluff and think about the news and customer benefits. Ask yourself:

- What is the news story?
- Who is the target audience?
- Why will customers be interested in the new product?

Press releases should provide journalists and their readers or viewers with real, current news. Journalists are busy so they should be kept short: preferably one side of A4, and a maximum of two sides. Ideally, press releases will also be tailored for different audiences.

Approach the writing of the press release as if it is a story in the target publication. Cover 'who, what, where, when and why' in the first paragraph. Make sure the most important information – the news – is at the top of the release, with more details in subsequent paragraphs.

Journalists receive hundreds of press releases every week. If they're not interested in the headline and first paragraph, they won't read any further.

### Time management

When working across a number of different accounts, where there are numerous projects running concurrently, it's vital for you and your team's success to learn how to prioritise and multi-task effectively. By mastering both skills quickly you will find the rest of your work easier to handle.

Here are some simple steps you can take immediately:

- **Understand how you work.** Everyone has different energy cycles throughout the day. Think about when you have the most energy during the day, as this is when you should plan your more demanding and stressful tasks.

- **Prioritise your tasks.** Start by writing a to-do list, listing all tasks, big and small. Next to each task mark how important each one is by using the letters A, B or C. Then using the numbers 1, 2, 3, mark how urgent they are. Tasks with A1 next to them need to be prioritised. Don't delay tasks until they are urgent.
- **Use a weekly planner.** Or set aside time in your calendar for important tasks and do these at your highest energy level. Beware of leaving difficult tasks until last and doing easy or enjoyable ones first. Be strict with yourself! Don't butterfly between tasks. Stick to the job in hand and focus.
- **Keep your team in the loop.** Always make your colleagues aware as early as you can if you think you are not going to make the pre-arranged deadline. On the other hand, beware of people encroaching upon your time.
- **Don't be a perfectionist...** but don't be careless! Find a happy medium. Be realistic about what you can achieve in the time you have.

## Presenting

Presentations are a vital component of PR. They allow consultancies and their clients to deliver key messages to potential and existing customers, employees, and other stakeholders. A great presentation is an effective blend of creativity, to keep the audience interested and engaged, and a clear focus on the key messages to be delivered.

There are a number of factors that will help you make successful presentations. Here are some top tips:

- Engage with your audience, and keep your enthusiasm and energy up throughout the presentation.
- Be yourself. You will sound better if you're relaxed and passionate about your subject.
- Relax. Take deep breaths to conquer last minute nerves.
- Make sure you can be heard, but don't shout if you're presenting to a small room.
- Don't look at your slides or visuals – keep facing the audience. Stand up if possible.
- Don't rush your presentation, or talk too slowly. Keep things at a natural pace.
- Pause at all your key points to emphasise their importance.
- Try not to focus on one person – it can be intimidating.

## Client management

PR practitioners operate in a market where the clients hold all the cards – it's called a buyer's market. The ability to develop good client handling skills, from understanding the character of your clients as individuals, to establishing real chemistry and rapport is therefore crucial.

Here is a brief guide to becoming your client's best friend!

- **Develop an understanding:** The process of building a dynamic relationship with your client starts with understanding their needs, and developing an understanding of their corporate culture.
- **Become a bookworm:** Read everything relevant to your client's business. You'll be expected to know what is going on within your client's industry at all times.
- **Constant contact:** Never let the client think "what have you done for me lately?" A phone call a day keeps the client's concerns at bay.
- **Honesty is the best policy:** You were hired because of your experience and knowledge of the PR profession, so if you have a good reason for disagreeing with the client, say so! The client will respect you for your objective advice.



- **Fresh thinking:** Don't just do the bare minimum – a good PR practitioner should continually strive to come up with new ideas in regard to the client's products, services and merchandising.
- **Remember, remember...** Your relationship may be purely about business, but that doesn't mean you can't treat your client like a friend. Little things do count, like sending a card or flowers on their birthday.
- **Teamwork:** It's important to know and keep in touch with all members of the client team, not only with your main contact.
- **A job well done:** Do what you say you will do, and always make sure your work comes up to the standards you would expect if you were the client yourself. Be a great person to work with.

### A quick note on pushing back...

One of the most effective ways of pushing back is to produce a clear timeline at the start of any programme. If your client then asks for something to be done within a tight deadline, you can refer to the timeline and say, "Yes, we can do this but will have to move X activity". You will come across as accommodating while still making the client aware that not everything can be done at once.

## Media Relations

Before you contact a journalist on a national or major regional newspaper, read the newspaper thoroughly, and try to understand what makes it tick – what is its tone? What is the news agenda? What are the readers like? Ask yourself whether your story, or your angle, is something that you could see appearing in the paper? If not, can you create an angle to make it suitable?

The next step is to find out who you should talk to about your story. For instance, there may be specialist reporters or editors covering areas from news, business and politics to sport, fashion and health. You will also need to know the publishing cycle of the newspaper or newspapers you are targeting. The last thing you want to do is put in a call just when the journalists have filed their copy and it's 'gone to print' (or press). So ask yourself whether your story is time critical, with breaking news that the journalist would hate to miss even as they are approaching a deadline, or can it wait?

Of course the best way to sell in your stories is to know someone at the other end of the phone. Cold calling with news is one of the hardest tasks in public relations, and it requires the hide of a rhino. So it's much easier if your story is specific to a particular section in the newspaper and is relatively timeless, for instance if you have produced some research and can control the date you release the results.

The key is building relationships with journalists who are relevant to the fields within which you work. A good way to start is to find out who the top ten journalists on national newspapers are who are relevant to your field of work. Aim to be a useful point of contact for them. They need to know that you know what you're talking about, are a source of interesting information, and are easy to deal with.

Introduce yourself by phone and follow up by email. Then use news to build the contacts. Don't try to become their new best friend. But do try to be someone they know who is a useful source even if helping them out with background information doesn't always achieve coverage directly for your client. You should know your client's sector inside out.

An 'exclusive' is news that is offered to one newspaper only, ahead of anyone else. If you control an exclusive then you are in a very strong position. But if you control them frequently then make sure you are certain of the relevance of the media you are offering them to. It's no good promising an exclusive just to make friends with a journalist if appearing in their publication will not benefit your client.

Chapter 6:

## Campaign showcase

### Launching National Geographic Kids magazine

Consultancy: **Mischief**

Client: **Attic Media Network**

#### The Challenge:

Attic Media Network asked Mischief to create awareness around the launch of its new title, National Geographic Kids, and drive sales of the magazine. The PR campaign had to achieve cut-through in an already overcrowded children's magazine market and capture the attention of parents and teachers of 6-14 year-old children.

#### The Solution:

Rather than blowing the budget on an expensive launch event which would deliver limited coverage, the team instead devised a strategy that would really lead the news agenda. They developed a news story that highlighted a problem – the fact that 1 in 5 kids can't find the UK on a map of the world – and positioned National Geographic Kids magazine as the solution.

Iconic environmentalist David Bellamy was recruited to front the launch, not only because of his expert knowledge, but because his larger than life personality appealed to the crucial audience of parents and teachers who grew up watching him on television.

Before the launch the team targeted news and features journalists by sending them a branded pet tree, which proved to be a great way to engage the media with the National Geographic Kids brand.

#### The Outcome:

The campaign generated over 300 pieces of coverage including 12 national print hits and 32 pieces of editorial broadcast coverage. Key pieces included the front page of The Sunday Telegraph, David Bellamy being interviewed on BBC Breakfast News and a 20-minute feature on the BBC Radio 2 Jeremy Vine show

The story even registered on the Government's agenda: it was debated in Prime Minister's Question Time and used to help launch a new 'learning outside the classroom initiative'.

With no other marketing support, the PR campaign sparked a nationwide debate, which gave National Geographic Kids instant credibility and relevance and resulted in record sales, making it Attic Media Network's most impactful magazine launch, which exceeded subscription targets.

[www.mischiefpr.com](http://www.mischiefpr.com)

# Driving interest in the Dungeons

Consultancy: **Nelson Bostock Communications**

Client: **London Dungeons**

## The Challenge:

London Dungeons asked Nelson Bostock Communications to devise a PR strategy that would fulfil a number of key objectives. First, to create awareness and excitement around its new hanging ride 'Extremis: Drop Ride to Doom' and to sustain media coverage over time, long after the launch of the ride. Secondly, to reach a family audience during the peak holiday period through broadcast media. Finally, to position the London Dungeons as irreverent, gory and controversial, yet historically accurate, educational and fun.

## The Solution:

Nelson Bostock Communications created a three-phase campaign to maximise, coverage and impact.

Phase one: Before the ride launched the team created interest and awareness of the ride with three news hooks: they put out a story to the media about builders being too scared to work in the Dungeon at night; conducted a controversial survey into hanging that stimulated national debate and held an open audition to find a 'young Dungeon master' to officially open the ride.

Phase two: The ride launched in April 2007, just before the Easter holidays. The team held a launch party for celebrities and media to generate broad consumer coverage, and placed ride news and reviews across national travel supplements, children's pages and websites, which maximised coverage of the launch and boosted visitor numbers in the following weeks.

Phase three: To maintain momentum post-launch, the team developed a news story that linked with the topical ASBO debate, creating awareness of the fact that many of today's petty offences would have been punishable by death in the 19th Century.

The media were encouraged to seek comment from the Justice Minister and the local MP, Harriet Harman and ASBO holders were also offered free entry to the London Dungeons if they agreed to be publicly humiliated, judged, sentenced and punished 19th Century style. The campaign was supported by a competition and reader offer programme in kids and national press at key holiday periods.

## The Outcome:

Each phase of the campaign generated key pieces across national and regional newspapers, general consumer and children's magazines and crucially, widespread coverage on TV programmes such as The Paul O'Grady Show, Friday Night with Jonathan Ross, BBC London News and Sky News. In the launch month visitor numbers were up seven per cent year-on-year and by the next month they were up by 19 per cent.

[www.nelsonbostock.com](http://www.nelsonbostock.com)

## Chapter 7:

# Consultancy profiles

## Broadgate

[www.bgate.co.uk](http://www.bgate.co.uk)



**“Broadgate is a London-based consultancy that operates in a highly specialised area of PR, working predominantly for financial services companies. Our clients include international banks, insurance companies, lawyers and fund management groups.**

But what exactly is Financial Services PR? Financial Services is often confused with Financial PR. Financial Services PR deals with issues that relate to everyone, such as insurance, investment and pensions. These stories tend to appear in the ‘Money’ or ‘Personal Finance’ sections of newspapers. Financial PR generally looks at a company’s performance and is aimed at informing shareholders and business analysts. These stories appear in the business sections of newspapers.

Financial Services, as a PR sector, has grown in recent years reflecting the public’s increasing interest in their own financial health. Whether it’s planning for retirement or finding the cheapest car insurance, this subject affects both the young and old and has recently moved from being a topic that sent most people to sleep, to being front page and headline news. The challenge for many companies is to find a way of making their financial story interesting to a broader audience and obviously that is where PR plays a key role. Learning about the impact of the Chancellor’s latest tax changes, what a hedge fund is or where to invest your hard earned

savings are all areas we work with to obtain coverage for clients.

Seeking innovative and interesting ways to highlight a potentially dull story is one of the strengths of Broadgate. The team at Broadgate comprises many young people whose previous interest in money extended no further than the amount of money available to spend in bars or shops. However, given the training that we provide it’s amazing to see staff develop and grasp the technical topics with gusto. Staff become proficient in many complex financial topics and are able to convey the key points to journalists in a way that converts a client’s technical issue into language they relate to, enabling them to inform their audience. As a consultancy with 16 staff we are able to work in an open-plan environment and each client is allocated a team comprising typically of an Account Director, Account Manager and Account Executive. Training for all staff at each level is vital to our continuing success and we spend a lot of time on both internal and external sessions to help staff develop both their PR and technical skills.

The beauty of working at Broadgate is that no two days or two clients are the same. Because of the ever evolving and changing nature of financial services, everyday holds hidden challenges, making it a very stimulating and vibrant place to work.”

***Roland Cross, Director***

# Cow

[www.cowpr.com](http://www.cowpr.com)



**“We’re a creative ideas and PR consultancy that’s been going for six and a half years. From two people and two clients we’ve grown to a team of 35 and a client list that includes Google, Burger King, Tesco and General Motors.**

In the past we’ve been branded a ‘consumer shop’, but in reality we don’t have a typical client. We cover everything from consumer and B2B, to trade and corporate PR. We avoid template PR, believing that creativity and delivering a great commercial return shouldn’t be mutually exclusive, but should go hand-in-hand.

Our mission is to be the best, employ the best and be recognised in the industry as one of the best places to work. We have music playing in the office all day and provide breakfast, tea and coffee. We appreciate that sometimes people might want to get their head down and work from home and that sometimes it’s nice to get away from your desk, so we give everyone access to laptops so we can work in our lounge/bar area from the comfort of a sofa or coffee table. We’re unfussy, straightforward, fun to work with and very process-free.

There isn’t a typical day here at Cow, though we like to start the day with our morning newspaper digest over a cup of tea and toast. From this we flag any articles that might be of interest to our clients or jump on the back of anything newsworthy to create extra news for our clients.

The rest of our day might include client meetings, team meetings, creative brainstorming, planning and sending over coverage to the client. Liaising with journalists is a key part of the day, it might be to sell in press releases or feature ideas, to request forward feature lists or attend a journalist lunch.

We also have Bovine Brekkies – fortnightly breakfast meetings that give us a chance to get together and share ideas, recent campaign successes, client news, interesting things we’ve seen and to generally catch up.

Over the past five years, over 32 of our campaigns have either won or been shortlisted for awards. This year we were a finalist for Consultancy of the Year at the PRWeek Awards.

Two Cow campaigns were recently shortlisted for the SABRE Awards. The TrustMark launch was shortlisted for Best Trade Association Campaign and Chevrolet Matiz ‘Car in Bloom’ won Best Publicity Stunt in Europe.”

***Dirk Singer, Co-Founder  
Sian Morgan, Co-Founder***

# Eulogy!

[www.eulogy.co.uk](http://www.eulogy.co.uk)



**“Eulogy! is a fast-growing B2B and B2C PR agency based in central London. We now have 35 full-time staff on board and are constantly on the lookout for more talented people to come and join us.**

Eulogy! is the largest agency that specialises in PR for the marketing services, publishing and media sectors, and this accounts for the majority of our client base. We work with household names like Royal Mail, Reader’s Digest, Virgin Radio, Pearl & Dean and VMTV, as well as industry bodies like the PPA, the APA and the ABC. We are particularly proud of our client redemption rate, and have worked with several of our clients for more than five years.

However, the agency has more recently started to expand into other areas and we are currently working on major consumer briefs for Becks beer, Virgin Mobile, Royal Mail, luxury drinks brand Tuaca and the Beatles-inspired Hard Days Night Hotel in Liverpool.

We pride ourselves on our intelligent approach to PR and our understanding of the media landscape and as such, are one of the few PR agencies that can deliver exceptionally good combined B2B and B2C services to clients. For example, we work with cinema advertising house Pearl & Dean to raise its profile as an advertising house within the media industry, as well as promoting their cinema and film portal [www.pearlanddean.com](http://www.pearlanddean.com) to a consumer audience. This flexibility is fairly unusual in the PR industry and is very popular with clients.

We are also leading the way in digital through our integrated offering with Onlinefire PR, who are responsible for raising the profile of our clients through online PR and amplification.

At Eulogy! we are committed to ensuring that the agency is a happy and rewarding place to work so we keep after-hours and weekend working to a minimum. Staff benefits are also geared towards health and happiness and include free private healthcare, gym membership and fresh fruit in the office. We also have an early finish on the ‘First Friday’ of every month, so everyone can make the most of their weekend.

I don’t think any PR agency has a typical day, but if we did at Eulogy! it would start with us looking through the papers to flag up articles that are of interest to our clients and to keep on top of the latest news trends. From then on the day could involve client, journalist and internal staff meetings, photoshoots, pitches, but above all just getting on with the job and generating coverage for our clients.

A couple of times a week the agency gathers in the boardroom for a brainstorm to create and share ideas for our existing clients or for new business pitches. Everyone really enjoys these sessions, and not just because of the unofficial rule that you have to buy treats for everyone to get their creative juices flowing.

We also like to invite journalists to come into the office to get to know us better, and to share their knowledge and experience with us in our regular ‘learn and burn’ sessions. In the past year, we’ve heard from journalists and producers from BBC Five Live, The Independent and Working Lunch.

Regular nights out organised by the social committee, as well as Christmas party trips to cities like Paris and Dublin, create a great working atmosphere in an office where there is a lot of laughter. Just as there isn’t a typical Eulogy! personality, this isn’t a typical PR agency.”

***Jonny Lockwood, Account Director***

# Golley Slater Public Relations

[www.golleyslater.com](http://www.golleyslater.com)



**“When you join Golley Slater you enter a culture built around close-knit teams and collaborative working – whether it’s within your own office or with colleagues across the country. You join an account team which recognises and rewards the contributions that individuals make, within a framework of support which extends way beyond day-to-day business matters.**

These smaller teams of talented individuals thrive because they are surrounded by people, whose skills, experience and personalities complement their own, all contributing to the greater strength of each of our eight UK offices. Our collective strength is built around a network of PR

businesses which are among the very best in their nation or region – in Scotland and Wales, throughout the North and Midlands and from the South West across to London. For the people involved, this means being able to work with the most experienced colleagues for the best clients in the region which they chose to make their home, while at the same time joining for other work with offices in neighbouring regions or on major national accounts that run across our network. Everyone will tell you that ‘people are our most important asset’ but in the PR world they literally are the business. So developing the people, keeping them interested, motivated and fulfilled remains an absolute priority for us.

There are of course formal ways of doing this – we sign up all of our staff for membership of the CIPR and everyone has a tailored personal development plan to help them manage their own training and improve their work and personal skills. It’s also about making sure that we are offering the right mix of rewards, benefits and extra touches, like giving everyone an extra day’s holiday on their birthday. But where people really get a kick out of what they do is the variety of the job and the results they deliver. The variety in the job is often what attracts people (especially those who would otherwise have opted for journalism). No day is ever typical but you can expect lots of writing and time spent talking to

clients and the media, your day could also take you from writing copy for a client’s website or setting up photoshoots, to brainstorming creative campaign ideas or dealing with the media response to a major issue affecting a client. And the people we do it for always keep it interesting. The teams at Golley Slater are working for household names like Greggs, Hilton, LloydsTSB Commercial Finance, Marriott and Persimmon Homes. We work with our advertising and marketing colleagues from the wider Golley Slater Group to support all of the Army’s recruitment work across the country, help the government in Wales to increasing recycling and are helping some of the biggest developers in UK with multi-million pound retail, residential and energy projects.

On top of the variety, what drives people is the satisfaction of delivering results – whether that’s an inspired (sometimes award-winning) campaign for a client which has made a measurable difference to their business, or winning a new piece of work which makes a positive difference to ours. Many of the people now running our businesses started out with us in Junior Executive positions, straight out of university. That first thrill you’ll get from seeing a story you’ve written in print could be the start of a rewarding career that offers you the scope to fulfill your potential – and could even take you all the way to the top.”

***Martin Long, Managing Director***



# Hill & Knowlton

[www.hillandknowlton.com](http://www.hillandknowlton.com)



**“At Hill & Knowlton, we take on the toughest tasks and deliver real brand and business outcomes. As a firm we are deliberately structured to meet even the most complex demands by connecting practice skills, sector expertise and geographic reach.**

We understand our clients’ businesses and communications issues, we develop communications strategies that deliver for them and we put in place whatever is needed to help get the end result – success for our clients. This means that our staff have the opportunity to work on exciting and ground-breaking campaigns for varied and interesting clients.

For example, our work on the Ariel ‘Do a Good Turn’ campaign for P&G in the UK has been recognised across Europe, winning four awards this year. This campaign put the issue of energy saving in the home on the map. In addition, as part of the WPP group we link into a larger global network allowing our staff to work on integrated service campaigns. We are specialists and execute successful campaigns across Consumer and Corporate Communications, Public Affairs, Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, Digital, Change & Internal Communications and Healthcare.

In 2008 The Holmes Report acknowledged us as the No. 1 Most Admired Consultancy across EMEA. The Holmes Group is an influential voice in the industry and exists to provide competitive insight and intelligence to public relations professionals. We were also judged in a poll of employees as the agency staff would most like to work for if they were to move. The Holmes Report singled out Hill & Knowlton’s professional development programme as helping us to stand out from our competitors. The programme includes First Chair and Maestro – a client service skills training course for senior management, which has now been rolled out across other WPP companies. We have many success stories which prove how our staff love working at H&K and how H&K provides tremendous career opportunities. Sam joined H&K on the graduate scheme in

1997 and is now Head of Business & Offer Development and sits on the Executive Committee, a group of six senior members of staff who steer the growth of H&K. Our training and career development excels within the industry. People are at the heart of our business and we make a great deal of effort to ensure that our colleagues have opportunities to thrive and develop in the H&K environment. We offer a full service consultancy and we bring specialists by service and industry together in ‘best teams’ to tackle clients’ assignments. This approach allows staff to gain a broad understanding of PR and allows mobility amongst divisions to ensure career development is maximised. For example, Alexandra moved from Consumer to Corporate Communications and is excelling in her new position. Each employee is also given the opportunity to donate time to the three charities chosen by our staff – The House of St Barnabas, Plan and Leukaemia Research Fund.

The H&K bar is the hub of the consultancy and open every evening serving subsidised drinks. An entertainment budget allows for consultancy parties, where we have the opportunity to socialise with all teams at all levels. And we have away days and team nights out – because it isn’t all about hard work!”

***Sally Costerton, Chief Executive***



# Unity

[www.hellounity.com](http://www.hellounity.com)



## **“Liberty, Equality, Unity.”**

Unity is a young, consumer-focused agency based in central London. We work with a rich mix of people, from Dirty Pretty Things, Graham Coxon and the fashion designer Pearl Lowe, a handful of charities such as WWF, Crisis and Scope, to Jamie Oliver’s restaurant Fifteen.

But as well as satisfying our conscience (and indulging our taste for music, fashion and food), we’ve also got our finger in a few other pies, from corporates like Royal Bank of Scotland and HSBC to a bunch of very successful health and cosmetic brands. In short, we like a varied diet, a tasty blend of the short, intensive project and the all-singing,

all-dancing integrated campaign; which is why we prefer to focus on the outcome or objective first, and then decide on the most appropriate tactic – which may include media relations, but also things like ambient, stunts, sponsorship, advertising, viral films and things we’ve not even thought of yet! It’s not that we’ve got anything against traditional PR per se; it’s just that we think that drafting a press release isn’t the only game in town.

At Unity, we believe in “whole brain PR”, balancing left-brain strategic rigour and right-brain creative allure. Ultimately, our vision is to melt the boundaries of PR by bringing together the best of the marketing mix (hence, ‘Unity’). So our multi award-winning campaign for homelessness charity Crisis, which targeted young affluent urbanites, didn’t just focus on the media, though we achieved over 250 pieces of coverage. It gave our audience something to get genuinely excited about: the chance to see a one-off indie acoustic gig, uniting two generations of Brit Rock – Athlete, Dirty Pretty Things, Supergrass, Graham Coxon and Babyshambles. Fundamentally, it understood our audience, by reaching them online – through YouTube virals, and social media like MySpace, Facebook and official band sites – and on the ground, by clever guerrilla marketing stunts, like getting the bands to spontaneously busk in prominent locations around the capital.

Work hours are pretty reasonable and flexible. Days start at 9.30am and finish at 5.30pm, with 4pm Fridays. There’s the option to do ‘flexi’, if you need to leave early or rock in late. A typical day involves getting in to be tasked with a new brief, spending the first couple of hours brainstorming a creative solution – anything from dreaming up an eye-catching stunt to identifying an appropriate celebrity advocate. Importantly, the whole company mucks in and, as with campaigns themselves, we always mix it up with our junior people working alongside our senior.

It might sound obvious, but we regard a lively exchange of ideas, experiences and personal interests to be a vital ingredient of our company environment. That’s why we’re not after mini-me’s and prefer instead, bright, creative individuals, with an eye for news and a finger on the pulse of popular culture. For us, camaraderie is key; it’s what makes us Unity. So as well as occasional nights out together, every fortnight a pair of us takes a turn to cook for the team, with varying culinary success. And if you bring in your iPod, you’ll also get a chance to share your taste in music!”

***Gerry Hopkinson, Co-Founder***

Chapter 8:

## Where to find out more

### Which PR consultancies run graduate trainee schemes?

AxiCom; Burson-Marsteller; Brave PR; Broadgate; Campaign Communications; The Communication Group; Edelman; Fleishman-Hillard; Frank PR; GCI London; Golley Slater Group; Hill & Knowlton; IDEA Generation; Kinross + Render; Lansons Communications; Lexis Public Relations; Pleon; Threepipe Communications; Trimedia Harrison Cowley; Waggener Edstrom.

### What Universities offer PR degrees?

Leeds Metropolitan University; Bournemouth University; University of Bedfordshire; Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College; Birmingham City University; University of Central Lancashire; University of Chester; University of Derby; Edge Hill University; University College Falmouth; University of Greenwich; University of Gloucestershire; University of Hertfordshire; UHI Millennium Institute; The University of Huddersfield; University of Lincoln; Liverpool John Moores University; London Metropolitan University Marjon – The College of St Mark & St John; Northumbria University; University of Northampton; Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh; The Robert Gordon University; Sheffield Hallam University; Southampton Solent University; University of Sunderland; University of Wales Swansea; University of Teesside; Thames Valley University; University of Ulster; University of the Arts London; University of Westminster; University of Wolverhampton; University of Worcester.

### Where can I find out about current vacancies for graduate positions?

- Your careers centre at your university
- The Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) website – [www.prca.org.uk](http://www.prca.org.uk)
- PR Week – [www.prweekjobs.co.uk](http://www.prweekjobs.co.uk)
- Milkround.com – [www.milkround.com](http://www.milkround.com) (Graduate recruitment)
- Media Guardian – <http://jobs.guardian.co.uk>

### How can I learn more about the industry?

- Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) – [www.prca.org.uk](http://www.prca.org.uk)
- Institute of Public Relations – [www.ipr.org.uk](http://www.ipr.org.uk)
- PR Week – [www.prweek.com/uk](http://www.prweek.com/uk)
- Graduate Recruitment Bureau – [www.grb.uk.com](http://www.grb.uk.com)



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FrontLine 

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