



Public Relations for Industrial Technology

 qhhc lewis

How does public relations help me meet my business goals?



Although public relations (PR) is a well-established marketing tool, industrial technology companies are typically sales-focused, and product marketing managers demand sales leads from marketing programmes. With earned editorial content often offering little in the way of clicks, conversions and return on investment, making the case for public relations, even as part of a wider campaign, can be challenging.

Turning to my colleagues for a concise way of justifying the value of PR, the responses I got were: when you are looking for the latest information do you watch the news or listen to the commercials? Another said: which offers more credibility, you saying how great your own product is within an advert or a third party saying it within an article? Another colleague described PR as building brand reputation over time and used the delightful phrase “planting seeds that’ll grow into a forest of credibility.” Or put another way, PR is not about getting someone’s phone number, it’s about others preparing the ground, so that when you ask for the number, it’s more likely you are given it.

PR does have metrics of course, but they are different to those used for other marketing. For example, when gaining editorial coverage, a measurable metric would be the reach of the publication or the number of followers a journalist has on social media.

The different objectives of PR can be measured in different ways:

Awareness: reach or views

Reputation: surveys, polls, or viewing conversations about your technology

Behaviour: how many join an email list, register for an event, etc.

Although these may help, a little more depth to your argument probably won’t go amiss. So, first things first, what is PR? PR is the strategic management of how your business communicates with the world. PR can be one of the most cost-effective marketing tools helping companies to shape perceptions, build relationships and influence the way others see your brand. Making connections and building trust are essential for long-term business success and this is where PR delivers value.

PR provides a strong foundation for marketing efforts. It is crucial for building credibility, managing reputation, increasing brand awareness, fostering relationships and controlling the narrative. PR helps businesses stand out, attract investment and engage audiences by creating authentic content and positioning leaders as experts. It is generally regarded as more trustworthy and effective for long-term growth and sales than traditional advertising alone.

Improving reputation: Business success is enhanced through trust and having a good reputation. PR continuously helps to strengthen reputation and brand value. Should a negative event arise that could impact that reputation, crisis management in the form of strategic communications can be used to control the narrative, inform stakeholders and mitigate severe reputational damage. Existing relations with trade media can also help regain trust.

Promoting brand value: Promotion of your technology and services through reputed media can increase credibility. Delivering your desired message in a strategic way can influence potential customers and boost business growth. Press releases, articles and social media posts help you to connect with your existing and potential customers and allow them to discover the qualities and benefits of your solutions.

Improving online presence: The online presence of a business is critical, and PR can help increase traffic to your website and create new customers. Digital PR, which incorporates content, outreach and digital channels (social media, online publications, etc.) also helps to enhance the SEO ranking of your website, which can directly impact sales. SEO performance relies on high quality content, which itself helps attract website visitors.

Increasing sales: PR is an essential marketing tool that is used as part of wider marketing programmes to help garner customers and sales. PR helps sales by building credibility, increasing brand visibility, and accelerating the sales cycle through strategic storytelling and reputation management. By securing media coverage and thought leadership, PR fosters trust, allowing sales teams to overcome objections and engage prospects more effectively.

Media and technologies to support your PR

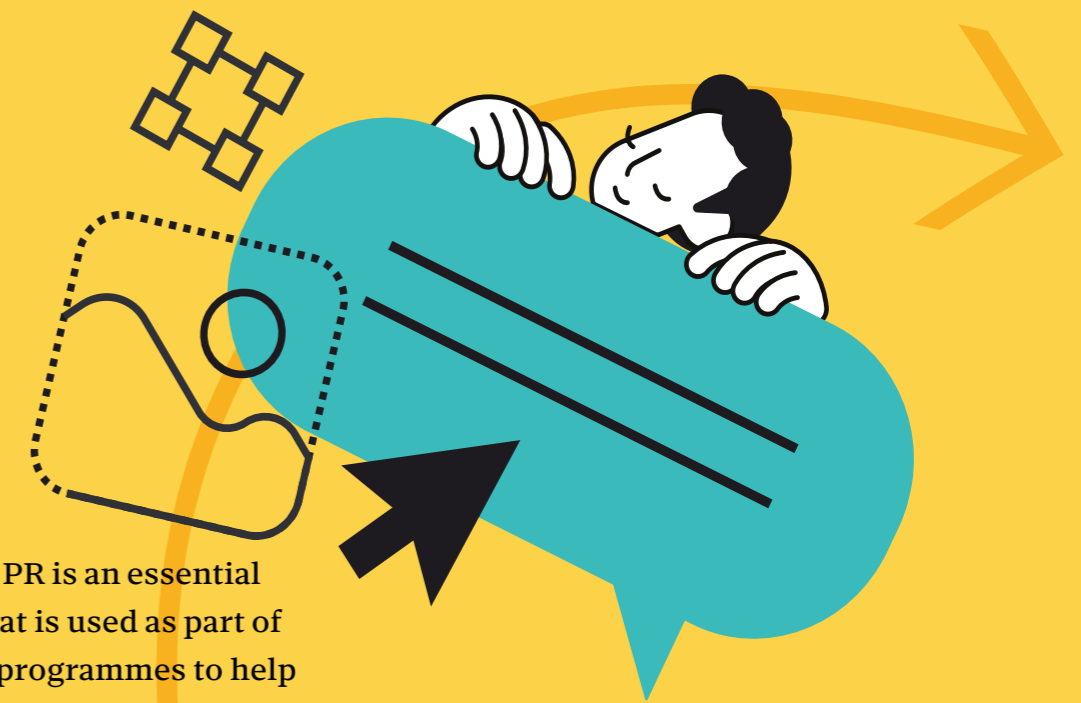
Trade media: Working with trade and technical media offers long-term benefits and opportunities to your business. The publishing of your news, application stories and thought leadership articles will assist your company and brand in reaching the appropriate target audience.

Broadcasting: Utilising video and podcasts that are hosted on your own website, social media or trade media allows you to promote your technology or service to your target audience in media that are more readily consumed by the latest generation of engineers.

Social media: Social media platforms such as Facebook, X and LinkedIn offer the opportunity to reach your target audiences. High-quality PR content creates the opportunity to interact with your customers and gain immediate feedback. Close relations with journalists and influencers can help amplify news and information.

AI tools: Artificial intelligence tools assist PR by enhancing the quality and speed of content creation.

Conclusion Although PR may not always be able to provide the desired metrics of clicks and conversions, it is an essential marketing tool offering the opportunity for a transformative impact on a business. Strategic use of PR will enhance your business reputation, credibility and trust, helping you to connect with your target audience and achieve your long-term business goals.



How to write for an engineering audience

Writing material specifically aimed at engineers demands similar skills to those required for any other audience, as producing high-quality copy is essential no matter who the reader might be. However, to engage engineers a writer needs the ability to not only understand often complex subject matter but also convey that understanding clearly and concisely. Having an engineering background can certainly help, but extensive technical knowledge doesn't necessarily convert into accomplished writing.



"The best writers are those who know their audience, understand the subject matter, and can consolidate complex technical information and make it accessible to the average engineer."



For those with the dual skill set, time tends to be the biggest problem – they never have enough. The same goes for the target audience, so it's incredibly important to get the writing right. Engineers don't have lots of time to spare, so if you manage to grab their attention with an article that they are interested in, you had better not lose them through poor writing.

The first port of call when looking to get a message across to engineers is usually a trade journal or its corresponding website. When producing press releases, articles, case studies or white papers for this media, a writer needs to make sure that the average engineer can understand them and benefit from them. To achieve this, the writing should be crisp, comprehensible, and with a level of technical detail which is appropriate for its target audience's knowledge.

When trade media commission a technical article, they will usually give the author a strict word limit. With ever-diminishing levels of print advertising comes reduced editorial space, which means that even if you are trying to outline a potentially

complicated challenge and explain its solution you will have very little space in which to do it, so you will need to be very succinct and incisive. Try not to use two words where one will suffice.

The use of slang, jargon and acronyms should be avoided. Just because you know what an industry-specific term means, or what an acronym stands for, don't assume that all your readers will know too. There are exceptions of course, with some terms or acronyms being almost universally recognised. However, to ensure greater clarity, always try to keep it simple and stick to plain, accurate English.

When it comes to technical detail, it's important to understand the level of knowledge the target audience has and not waste words on basic information that the readers are already likely to know. For example, if you were writing about level measurement in bulk liquid storage tanks, for a journal focused specifically on tank storage, there would be no need to give an overview of the different types of storage tanks available.

The readers already know about tanks, so tell them something they don't know. However, if the article was to be pitched to a magazine covering the oil and gas industry in general, the readership would be much broader and an overview of the different tanks to which the level technology can be applied might then be useful.

Another pitfall for technical writers is believing that just because you are writing for engineers, you need to sound like an engineer. However detailed your subject matter might be, it is still your responsibility to make your writing as captivating as possible for readers, rather than risk losing their interest by sounding like an instruction manual.

Adopting a lighter tone can often be helpful in this regard. Honestly. You see, you feel more comfortable reading this less formal style already, don't you?

The best writers are those who know their audience, understand the subject matter, and can consolidate complex technical information and make it accessible to the average engineer.

At HHC Lewis we have one of the UK's most experienced and respected teams of industrial and technical public relations specialists.

It includes not only engineers, but also journalists, technical writers, editors and marketing professionals who have great experience writing for engineers and a technical audience.



Why trade media still matters in the age of AI

The rapid rise of artificial intelligence has changed how engineers, plant managers and technology buyers find information. A decade ago, answering a technical question about automation architecture or materials performance might have meant hours of searching, reading white papers or calling a supplier. Today, a well-phrased prompt can produce a competent summary in seconds. Yet despite this unprecedented access to information, trade media remain critically important in promoting industrial technology – and in some ways, their role is becoming even more valuable.





AI can explain how a technology works, but trade media demonstrate why it matters and how it succeeds in practice.



AI excels at synthesising existing knowledge and providing quick, generalised answers. It can explain how predictive maintenance works or outline the principles of process optimisation with impressive clarity. What it cannot fully replace is the depth, context, and credibility that trade media bring to industrial decision-making.

Trade publications are deeply embedded in their industries. Their editors follow standards updates, capital spending cycles, workforce shortages and supply-chain constraints year after year. They know which ‘breakthroughs’ quietly disappeared and which incremental improvements genuinely changed plant performance. This context enables them to turn raw information into insight – something AI alone cannot consistently guarantee.

Credibility is equally important. In industrial sectors, decisions often involve high capital expenditure, safety risks, and long-term operational consequences. Engineers and executives need sources they trust. When a facilities director evaluates a new control system, the question is not just “How does it work?” but “Who else has deployed it, and what happened next?” Trade media rely on experienced journalists, industry experts, and rigorous editorial standards.

Unlike AI-generated responses, which may blend accurate data with outdated or unverifiable sources, trade media provide accountability, transparency, and fact-checking. Readers know who is speaking, why, and with what expertise.

Trade media also excel at showing technology in action. Seeing how a manufacturer successfully implemented predictive maintenance or transitioned to Industry 4.0 reduces perceived risk and builds confidence. A case study about a manufacturer reducing downtime by 8% after implementing condition monitoring carries weight because it reflects constraints, compromises and measurable outcomes. AI can explain how a technology works, but trade media demonstrate why it matters and how it succeeds in practice.

There is also the matter of discernment. Industrial technology is saturated with claims of disruption and transformation. Not every innovation reshapes a sector. Editors make choices about what deserves coverage and what does not. That filtering function is easy to underestimate, yet it saves readers time and protects them from noise disguised as insight.

Finally, trade media foster industry communities. Through events, webinars, awards and opinion

columns, they create shared conversations about challenges and future directions. When a sector debates hydrogen viability or cybersecurity compliance, it is rarely an algorithm that sets the agenda – it is editorial leadership.

In an AI-driven world, trade media are not obsolete – they are essential. They provide trust, context and connection, ensuring that industrial technologies are not just understood, but responsibly evaluated and effectively adopted.

In this environment, access to trade media alone is not enough. Understanding how editorial decisions are made – and what genuinely earns coverage – has become increasingly important. PR teams with established relationships and a working knowledge of editorial priorities can play a pivotal role here. By shaping credible stories, aligning them with sector concerns and presenting them in a way that respects journalistic standards, they help ensure that valuable innovations reach the right desks – and ultimately, the right readers.



Contact HHC Lewis to see how we can maximise the potential of trade media.

How to get heard above the noise

If industrial technology companies employ their own marketing departments, it seems reasonable to wonder why they would need to employ an external public relations agency. Could the public relations activity not be performed in-house, helping to reduce costs and maintain tighter control over output? The simple answer to this question is yes, it could, but there are often good reasons why they may prefer to work with a specialist agency, not least because they don't have the in-house skill set.

It has also become increasingly hard to get heard above the noise. Very few companies overlook the opportunity that PR brings to a marketing campaign, which means that every media outlet is inundated with press releases, abstracts and pitches. To gain the exposure you desire, it is important to provide the type of material that editors are keen to publish.



This is an area in which a PR agency comes into its own. The most fundamental way is through the provision of high-quality technical writing. Specialist PR agencies employ experienced and knowledgeable writers, who produce engaging content based on often complex and highly technical subject matter. Critically, these PR professionals, often former journalists, understand what editors are looking for, and shape the material to make it as appealing as possible.

For example, a company might be keen to gain exposure for an existing product range. That is a common requirement and one that presents a challenge. The product is not new, so you can't write a press release announcing its launch. Perhaps the existing customers are reluctant to reveal their critical advantage, so won't permit an application story that shines a light on the benefits the product provides.

This limits options, but simply writing a 'puff piece' that describes how wonderful the products are will not interest the editor of a trade and technical journal. What is required is thought-provoking content that perhaps focuses on industry best practice or ways of solving a specific challenge. This kind of material offers something of educational benefit to the readers and thus will excite the editor.

PR agencies understand this and can produce material that achieves the delicate balance of meeting strict editorial requirements, while also promoting a client's product or service subtly, rather than in an overtly commercial fashion. By producing enlightening content, a PR agency can not only help the client to change perceptions within their industry, but also help to position them as a respected thought-leader.

Specialist PR agencies also have excellent editorial contacts across a wide spectrum of industrial technology media. Having in-depth knowledge of these publications, websites and journalists and their respective features schedules enables an on-the-ball agency to pinpoint the best editorial opportunities. Having established a trusted relationship with a magazine or journalist, it is not uncommon for them to seek the agency's services in providing an article or comment, thereby creating a valuable advantage for its client.

At HHC Lewis, we specialise in providing PR and media relations services for industrial technology, engineering and manufacturing clients. Our respected team of technical writers has great experience, especially in promoting factory automation and process control technology and services across a wide range of industries. This has enabled us to develop well-established, trusted editorial contacts in trade and technical journals, magazines and websites throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and North America.

Working with HHC Lewis will help your company get its message across to the widest and most appropriate audience. Our PR services include developing and distributing high-quality editorial content with educational value, which will appeal to both editors and their publications' specialist readership.



If you would like to know more about how HHC Lewis can help with your PR campaign, please get in touch.



A white humanoid robot with a human-like face and torso, but with visible mechanical joints and components, is standing in a library. It is holding an open magazine. The magazine cover on the left side has the text "Synchronising microbiology in your laboratory" and an image of a microscope. The cover on the right side has the text "Trade MAGAZINE" and an image of a person wearing a headset. The background is a blurred library with bookshelves filled with books.

The Rise of GEO: Why PR Matters More Than Ever

AI-driven search is changing how people find information, reducing the impact of traditional organic traffic. As the focus shifts from SEO to generative engine optimisation (GEO), brands must ensure their content is referenced in AI-generated answers. With approximately 90% of AI-cited links coming from earned media and third-party sources, public relations has never been more critical to visibility.

For years, SEO has been the backbone of digital visibility, driving traffic, shaping content and helping brands get in front of the right audiences. Websites have been carefully structured so search engines can crawl and index them, while messaging has been refined to align with what people are actually searching for.

PR has played a key role, helping to build authority through media coverage, backlinks and brand mentions – factors that have long influenced how search engines rank content. For PR professionals, SEO has also shaped how content is written – balancing readability, keyword relevance and search performance to attract qualified traffic.

But the way people search is starting to shift. AI-powered platforms are changing the experience entirely, moving users away from lists of links and towards direct answers. In many cases, there's no need to click through at all.

Zero-click searches now account for around 60–65% of queries, and some sectors are already seeing organic traffic fall by as much as 30%. At the same time, the traffic that does come via AI tends to be more valuable. These are users asking more detailed questions and often further along in their decision-making, which means while overall volume may decline, intent is increasing. This is where generative engine optimisation, or GEO, comes in.

Where SEO focused on rankings and clicks, GEO is about being cited. Visibility is no longer determined solely by where your website appears in search results, but by whether your content is used to shape the answer itself. That requires a different approach to content – one that prioritises clarity, depth and genuine usefulness. Content needs to be written in natural language, structured clearly and capable of answering real questions with authority.



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In simple terms, SEO was about being found; GEO is about being trusted. That trust, however, isn't built in isolation. AI engines tend to favour independent, authoritative sources – particularly established media, industry publications and expert commentary – rather than relying heavily on brand-owned content.

They draw from a broader ecosystem of credible voices to generate balanced responses, which is why earned media is becoming so influential. Coverage in trade publications, thought leadership articles and case studies provide the context and validation that AI models look for. It's this external reinforcement that helps position a brand as a reliable source of information.

As a result, visibility is becoming increasingly tied to reputation. Brands that are consistently referenced across credible outlets are more likely to be cited, shaping how they appear in AI-generated narratives.

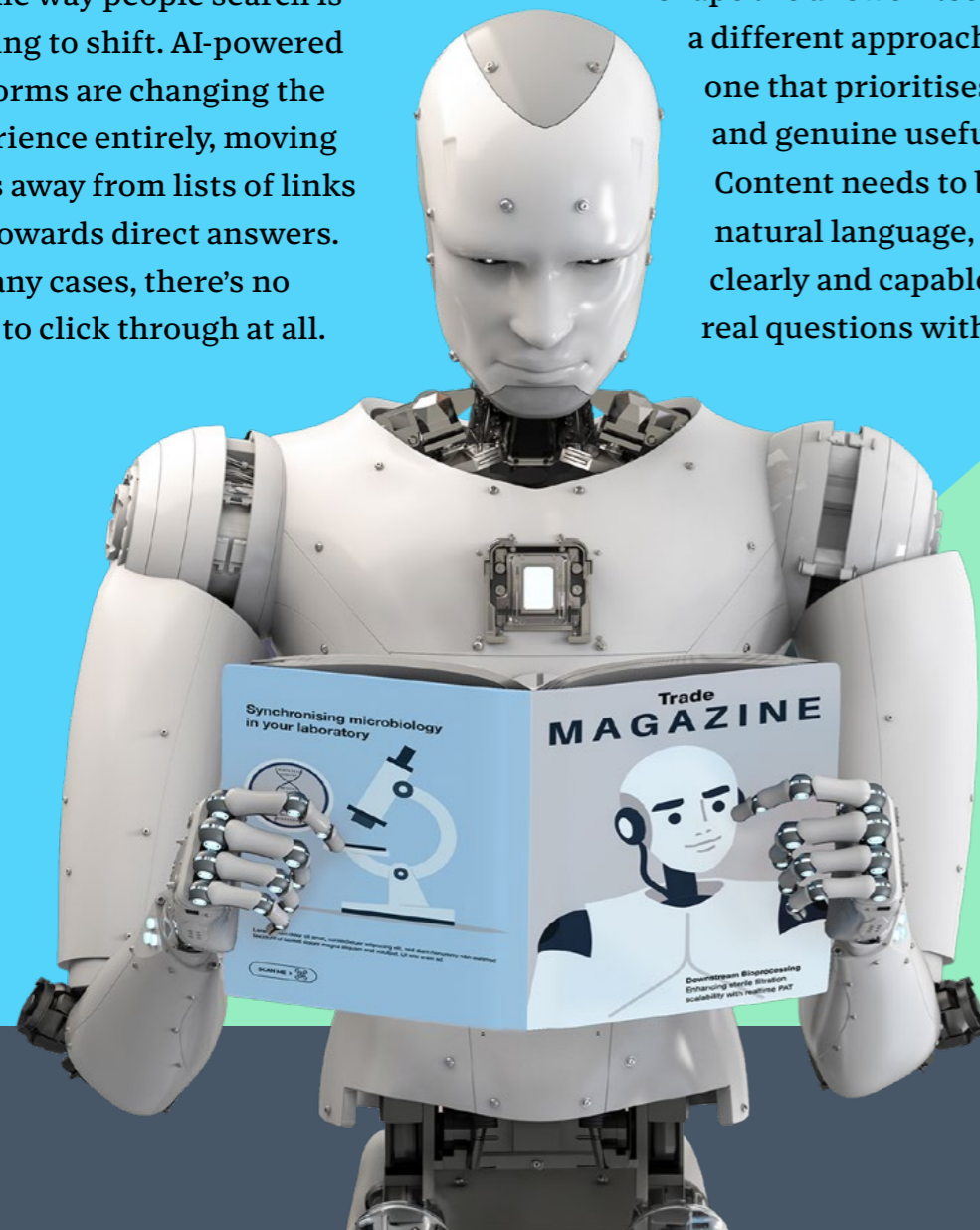
There is also a clear recency bias, with AI models often favouring more up-to-date content, meaning a steady flow of high-quality coverage matters just as much as individual standout pieces.

PR has always been about building trust and credibility, but historically its impact has been difficult to measure, often sitting outside traditional attribution models. In an AI-driven search environment, that influence is becoming far more visible. If your brand is being talked about in the right places, it is far more likely to appear in the answers people are given.

In a landscape where answers are generated rather than searched, visibility is no longer just about ranking – it's about recognition. And increasingly, that recognition is built through PR. But earning that recognition at scale requires the right media relationships, consistent content, and a clear strategy – making a PR agency an essential partner in achieving visibility in the age of AI.



If you would like to know more about how HHC Lewis can help with your SEO PR campaign, please get in touch.





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The logo for hhc lewis features a white speech bubble icon to the left of the text 'hhc lewis', which is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font.