



THE HIDDEN COST OF INACTION:

Why B2B brands can no
longer afford to ignore PR

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INTERNATIONAL

We're guessing that if you're reading this you fall into **one of four camps.**

You're not investing in PR because...



1. You're unsure of the benefits

You've been circling the idea for a while. You get that visibility matters, but will media coverage really drive leads? Right now, **it feels like a gamble and another thing to manage when you're already stretched.** Besides, you've got bigger fires to fight. You're not convinced now is the right time.

2. You're hesitating because leadership won't buy it.

Even if you wanted to do PR, how do you sell it internally? You can already hear the questions:

"How will we measure it?"

"What's the ROI?"

You're not a PR strategist, and frankly, you don't want to stick your neck out for something that might not land. The budget's tight. Everyone's watching the numbers. **You're under pressure to deliver fast, tangible results.** PR feels like it belongs in a different category - one you don't quite have the energy to defend right now.

3. You've been burned before

You've tried it. You wanted it to work but it didn't. You paid an agency a small fortune and ended up with little to show for it. Internally, it was embarrassing - awkward conversations and a lot of finger-pointing. **So now, when someone mentions PR, your gut reaction is: not again.**

4. Or maybe it's a mix of all three.

And yet, there's this nagging feeling that you're missing something.

We're here to confirm that you are. While you're keeping your head down, someone else is out there shaping the narrative. Saying the things your brand could be saying. Getting in the spotlight.

So if you're happy with that, by all means sit with it. You scroll past it. You say, "maybe later". **But later doesn't build your reputation.** And waiting doesn't earn visibility. In fact, not investing in PR is actually costing you more. **And the longer you put it off, the more the cost of your indecision rises.**

THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

While you're hesitating, your competitors are moving. **They're putting themselves out there.**

When we're under pressure, it's human nature to play it safe and stick with what we know. It's why we're more likely to cling to what we have - the status quo, comfort - than risk it for something better.

Psychologists call this loss aversion. We feel the pain of losing something more intensely than the joy of gaining the same thing.

Imagine you have £1000. Now, think about how happy you'd feel if someone gave you another £1000. Now, imagine someone takes away £1000. You'd probably feel really upset - more upset than you were happy when you were given the £1000. So even if we suspect there's an upside to something new, we hesitate. We tell ourselves it's safer to wait, that doing nothing is neutral and carries no real risk.

But avoiding the perceived risk of investing in PR can lead to a far greater one: the slow, silent loss of visibility, relevance and trust.

These losses rarely make a dramatic entrance. They happen quietly; a potential buyer chooses someone else. Not because your product wasn't good enough but because they've never heard of you.

You don't get notifications when you're not considered. And often, you don't realise what you've lost until it's too late to get it back.

While you're hesitating, your competitors are moving. They're putting themselves out there. They're shaping the narrative. They're getting quoted, featured, shared. And once they're seen as a credible name in your space, it's ten times harder for you to catch up.

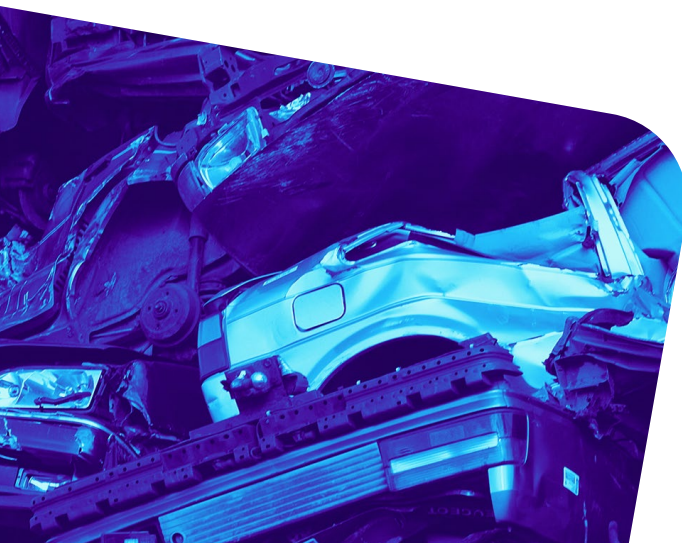
Wait too long to tell your story and someone else will tell theirs first and better. And over time, they start to define the category. They become the trusted name while you become the afterthought (or completely forgotten).

Did you know that 77% of B2B buyers do their own research before ever speaking to a salesperson? *

By the time your team gets in the room, your buyer has already formed a perception of you based on what they've read and heard (or failed to find). They're reading articles, listening to podcasts, watching panels, scrolling LinkedIn, asking their peers. And if your name doesn't come up? How can you expect to get a seat at the table?

Of course building credibility which gets you considered doesn't come from one press release or a single campaign. **It builds slowly and deliberately through a consistent drumbeat of thought leadership, commentary, interviews and opinion pieces.** If you do this, the drip, drip, drip will eventually become a stream, then a presence - and then your edge.

Still think doing nothing is the safer bet?



WHAT'S REALLY STOPPING YOU?

You're solving real, often complex problems in a niche space which can make you think - **is PR really necessary?**

By now, you might be thinking, okay, I get the argument but there is a reason we haven't done this yet - and that's completely fair. **Reluctance to invest in PR is based on past experience, internal pressures, on quiet hesitations** which surface when you're weighing where to focus and what's really going to move the needle.

We know you're not ignoring PR for no reason. You're being careful. You've got limited budget, limited time and big expectations to meet. **So let's name what's really holding you back.** Not to tear it down but to make space for a different kind of approach. One which meets you where you are and actually works.

"We can't measure it."

"It looked great on paper. But when my CEO asked what it delivered, I had nothing concrete to say. Just... impressions?"

If this sounds familiar, we hear you. Metrics like 'potential reach', 'media value' and 'brand awareness' can have their place but on their own, they're not enough. If someone showed that to us, we'd be sceptical too.

You're expected to deliver actual tangible results which move the business forward, and honestly, those kinds of metrics alone just don't.

"We don't have anything to say."

Your brand isn't flashy. It's not controversial. You're not launching a new app every quarter. You're solving real, often complex problems in a niche space which can make you think - is PR really necessary? Surely it's just reserved for the disruptors or the giants.

But you absolutely do have something to say. You just might not realise what it is yet.

One founder told us:

"We thought we were just a middleware company. Then our PR team reframed it and suddenly we were the ones calling out a broken part of the industry no one was talking about."

You don't need to reinvent your story. You just need someone who can articulate it, shape it and show why it matters to the right people.



“We’ve tried PR before and it didn’t work.”

This one often hits a nerve because if you’ve been through it, you know the cost. Time, budget and the uncomfortable feeling of having to defend something that didn’t deliver.

Maybe you got a handful of mentions but nothing moved the needle. Maybe the coverage was in the wrong places, or pitched to the wrong people. Maybe the agency didn’t understand your market or your goals.

One comms lead told us:

“We paid a small fortune, and six months later we had a PDF report and no real results. Internally, it was disappointing and externally, no one noticed.”

So you parked it. And we don’t blame you. But we’re here to tell you - that wasn’t Performance PR. That was the kind of PR that gives PR a bad name. An older, outdated model - unmeasured, unstrategic and unaccountable.

If that’s all you’ve experienced, it makes total sense why you’re wary now.

THE SOLUTION

PERFORMANCE PR



This is where things get more hopeful because there is a way to do PR differently. **Performance PR is an approach which is grounded in measurability and tied to business goals.**

It works backwards... starting with your business goals. What are you trying to achieve? Do you want to generate inbound leads? Do you want to be seen as a thought leader? Are you looking to expand to other markets?

From there, **campaigns and their activities are designed to align** and be measured against these goals.

Measurable metrics can include:

- Website referrals from PR coverage
- Uplift in website visits aligned with PR moments
- CRM engagement influenced by PR activity
- Visibility compared with competitors in earned coverage
- Social engagement from target audiences
- Coverage in publications with higher domain authority
- Prompted and unprompted brand consideration

When we report on our PR efforts, we group KPIs into three distinct categories: **visibility, engagement and impact.**

This audience-centric classification ensures you gain a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of the campaign. Did your audience see the campaign? How did they engage with it? And what action did the campaign prompt them to take?

This means when you go into a board meeting to represent the work that's been done by PR, **you can produce the kind of data and evidence which proves PR's value and its ROI.**

If your next thought is: "This sounds great, but I don't have the bandwidth". A good PR partner doesn't just wait for stories to land on their desk. **It's their job to find them, shape them and tell them well.**

) This is where a strong PR team should act as an extension of yours.

Additionally, this version of PR doesn't live in a silo. It doesn't exist separately from the rest of your marketing or comms activity. It integrates with your demand gen, paid strategy and brand building, **helping to amplify it and make every channel work harder.**

THE TIME IS NOW



But what's the rush? The news is always going to be there. What's your business' ambition for the year?

If you're planning to raise investment, grow revenue or just make a few decent hires, **PR shouldn't be something to consider later - it's something to put to work now.** Until you start, you're losing opportunities.

Right now, reputation is doing a lot more heavy lifting in the world of B2B tech. Buyers' journeys are getting longer and more complex. Decisions are rarely made by one person anymore, they're shaped by buying committees, influenced by LinkedIn comments, Slack threads, Reddit posts, analyst write-ups and offline word of mouth. **Sales conversations don't start when you send the deck, they start long before, in channels you don't control.**

The time is now because you need to show up before your audience has made up their mind, when reputation still has the power to influence outcomes. Not when you're ready.

Building your reputation through credibility and trust also takes time. As they say, reputation arrives on foot (and leaves on horseback).

PR places your brand front and centre in the places your audience is already looking. So when the moment comes to choose a partner, a platform, a provider, your brand already feels familiar.

PR also has the power to cut through in our noisy world where AI-generated content, misinformation, advertising and promotion proliferate. Anyone can run a paid campaign or come up with an opinion via ChatGPT. Few can land an intelligent thought-led piece in the FT or a smart byline in the publication your buyers respect.

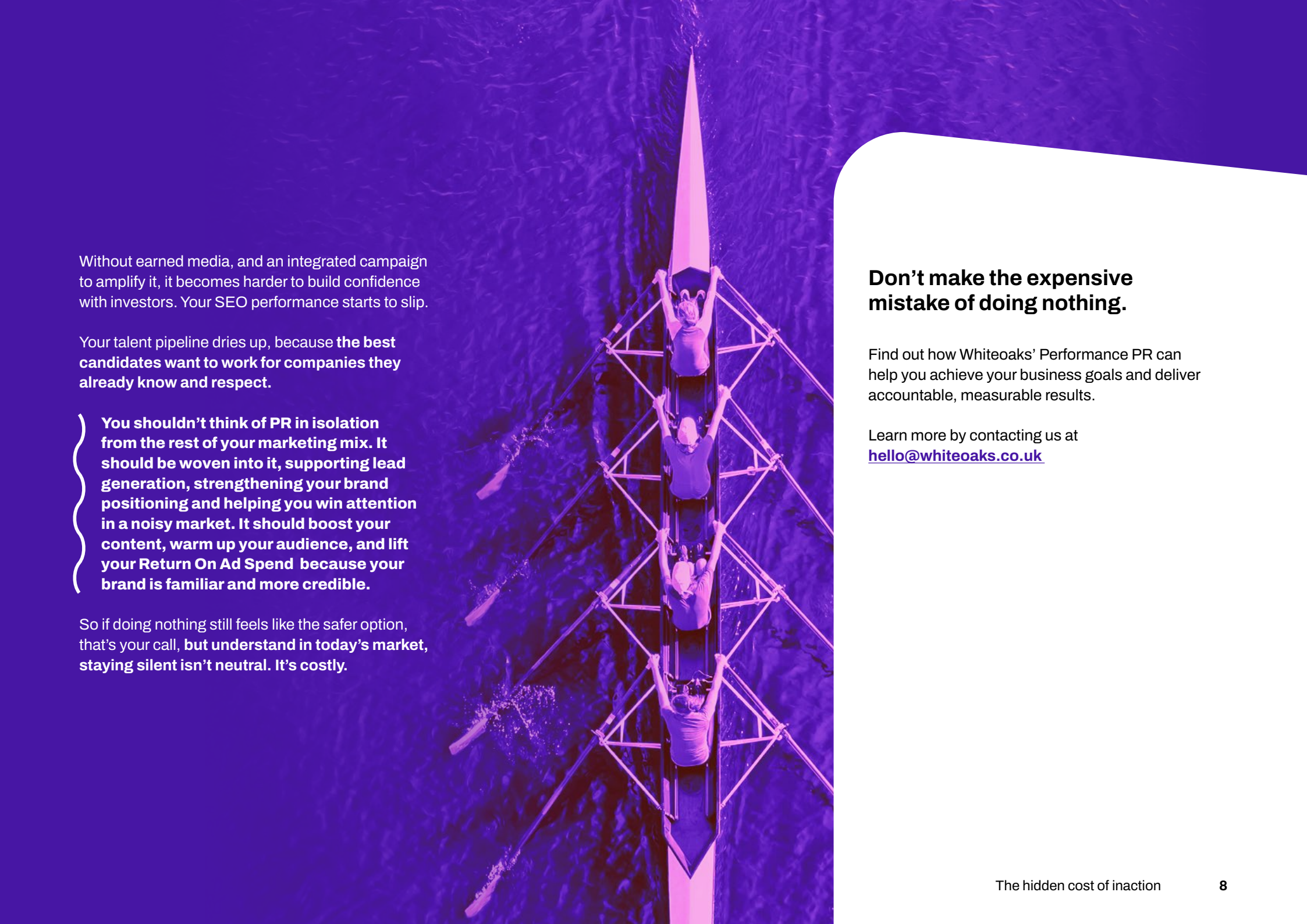
Earned media is much more trusted by audiences who have tuned out of the noise, are wiser and more selective about who they trust. They're drawn to brands who show up with substance, so in order to earn a place in the conversation, your brand needs to demonstrate credibility.

So if you've been waiting for a "better time" to invest in PR, the truth is that time was six months ago. **The next best time is right now.**

While you've been weighing things up, your competitors have been showing up. Their opinion piece just ran in TechCrunch. Their CTO is gaining traction on LinkedIn and starting conversations with your potential prospects.

Meanwhile, things on your side might be feeling a little slower. The CRM isn't as active as it once was. Inbound leads are stalling. Paid ads are costing more but delivering less. The channels you usually rely on are starting to feel stretched.

This is the cost of doing nothing. And the knock-on effect spreads.



Without earned media, and an integrated campaign to amplify it, it becomes harder to build confidence with investors. Your SEO performance starts to slip.

Your talent pipeline dries up, because **the best candidates want to work for companies they already know and respect.**

You shouldn't think of PR in isolation from the rest of your marketing mix. It should be woven into it, supporting lead generation, strengthening your brand positioning and helping you win attention in a noisy market. It should boost your content, warm up your audience, and lift your Return On Ad Spend because your brand is familiar and more credible.

So if doing nothing still feels like the safer option, that's your call, **but understand in today's market, staying silent isn't neutral. It's costly.**

Don't make the expensive mistake of doing nothing.

Find out how Whiteoaks' Performance PR can help you achieve your business goals and deliver accountable, measurable results.

Learn more by contacting us at hello@whiteoaks.co.uk

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