



whiteoaks
INTERNATIONAL

Contents

Intro	3
1. Begin with the basics: PR	4
2. Evolve your strategy to include digital PR and GEO.....	6
3. Ground your strategy in data.....	8
4. Make leadership part of the PR engine	10
5. Win over your CFO	11
6. Put your leaders in the spotlight	12
Ready to reset?	13





The world is hooked on being always on, always hustling, always pushing.

But you can't run at full tilt forever. At some point, you have to stop, review and reset. Because carrying on when things aren't working, doesn't fix them, it only wastes energy and budget.

But if you really think about it, there are always times when business allows for a slow down; the summer holidays and the run-up to Christmas are just some examples.

Sometimes a slow down is forced by pressure. Campaigns underperform. Budgets get squeezed. Business goals change.

Either way, these are prime opportunities to pause and reset. Don't perceive a reset as weakness. It's focus. It clarifies, allows you to move forward with direction, rebuild and kickstart you into a high-performing trajectory.

And when it comes to PR, a reset means going deeper than asking if your coverage landed.

It is about asking a few tough but important questions about how well your PR connects with the wider business:

- Is your communications strategy aligned with business goals?
- Are your teams engaged and ready to deliver?
- Are your leaders in the spotlight and aligned with what you're trying to achieve?
- Does finance see clear value in what PR brings?
- Are you investing in strategies that are current best practice and offer long-term success?

If even one of these is off, the whole communications engine underperforms.

So this is what this guide is all about; encouraging you to do the reset, create clarity, rebuild momentum and to let performance compound over time.

So, where should your reset begin?

1.

Begin with the basics: PR



John Broy
Chief Client Officer

You've recognised the moment - that's half the battle. But where should you begin?

A reset should always start with PR because this is where cracks appear first. If something is off, PR will expose it. Messaging, media engagement, KPIs - these are the early signals. That's what makes PR your best warning system.

So the first step in any reset is to ask the hard questions about your PR strategy, and here are a few of them which you should be answering:

1. Are campaigns becoming stale?

Outdated messaging can become stale and result in a lack of media engagement.

Content may be going over well-trodden ground, inducing media fatigue and losing relevance for audiences.

This is where you need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. This is where the hard work starts.

Be honest - does the messaging reflect what makes the company unique? Does it help you stand out from the competition? If not, then there's some hard work to be done.

This is where an experienced PR team could help by coming together to brainstorm new story angles, look at existing themes, question how they might have moved on and where you can be ahead of the curve.

Be honest - does the messaging reflect what makes the company unique?

2. Does the media landscape look the same?

It's largely out of your control but the media landscape can change over the course of a PR campaign. In your review you should examine:

- If target publications are still read by the audiences you want to reach
- Have they switched their focus to other areas?
- Do new journalists or publishers need to be added to your media list?

3. Is your media list still relevant?

If you want coverage, you need the right contacts. And it's more than making sure an email address works or that a journalist is still on the right patch.

It is about understanding what they care about now. Have their interests shifted? Are they chasing different kinds of stories? If your view of them is out of date, your pitch will be too.

4. Is your content still hitting the mark?

Think about what you are offering alongside your story. Strong images? Short video clips? Data that adds weight? Publications change what they look for, and if you are sending the same old formats you risk being ignored.

According to Muck Rack's State of Journalism 2025 report, 84% of journalists say some of their stories come from PR pitches but that the strongest pitches include original data, interview access and quality visuals. So if you're sending the same old formats, you risk being overlooked.

5. Does your diary need an overhaul?

Is your PR calendar a bit last year? Is it still working as hard as it should? Have you marked the right industry events to attend or contribute to? Are you ready to respond when big announcements or new trends land in your sector?

A calendar that is out of date makes it easy to miss opportunities. A calendar that is refreshed keeps you in the conversation.

6. Are the KPIs still right?

All good PR should be measurable. And to measure it, you need KPIs which align with your business goals. When those goals evolve, PR must evolve too.

That means regularly checking whether the objectives set at the start of a campaign still apply. Are you still targeting the same market? Are you still focused on the same solution? If the answer is no, your approach to measurement has to shift.

Revising KPIs is a natural part of keeping Performance PR effective. For example, if driving website traffic becomes a priority, it may be time to pivot towards digital PR, combining SEO best practice with media outreach to meet that goal.

If PR signals are off, it is rarely the whole story. Underperformance is the symptom, not the cause.



Resetting KPIs keeps campaigns aligned, helps them deliver results and strengthens content, media relationships and overall impact.

And if PR signals are off, it is rarely the whole story. Underperformance is the symptom, not the cause. Stale messaging might point back to leadership misalignment. Media fatigue could stem from content that lacks authority. KPIs drifting may reflect shifting business priorities.

PR shows you where the cracks appear. The fundamentals explain why they are there, which is why the next stage of a reset is to look deeper at your strategies, leadership, teams and finance.



2.

Evolve your strategy to include digital PR and GEO



Hannah Buckley
Head of Content and Service Development

Are you investing in strategies which follow current best practice and set you up for long-term success?

Communications moves fast and if you're using outdated tactics they could be holding you back.

Being visible today not only involves investing in approaches like digital PR and SEO, but also Generative Engine Optimisation (GEO) to maximise the chances of appearing in AI Overviews and AI-powered search.

As AI continues to change how people search and discover information, inclusion - not just ranking - is becoming the new goal.

What is digital PR and how is it evolving?

Digital PR has become a core part of how B2B tech brands build visibility and authority online.

It's the practice of gaining online coverage, links and engagement through content, media relations and digital-first outreach strategies. It combines the goals of traditional PR with the tactics of SEO and digital marketing.

The results of digital PR campaigns should include increased brand awareness and improved search performance that drives relevant traffic to your website. It also aids visibility across AI-powered search results too.

Ultimately, it's an essential part of a broader online PR strategy to help connect your brand with your audience where they're already searching - and where AI is increasingly answering.

As with traditional PR, the focus is on quality, relevance and outcomes, rather than just quantity.

What does digital PR involve?

A strong digital PR strategy can include:

- Creating thought leadership content that appeals to your target audience
- Developing blogs and website content to target high value keywords
- Pitching stories and insights to online media outlets and journalists
- Securing coverage with backlinks on high-authority websites
- Engaging with relevant online communities and influencers
- Amplifying earned media through social media and email campaigns

As with traditional PR, the focus is on quality, relevance and outcomes, rather than just quantity.

And the benefits go beyond search.

These same tactics - authoritative coverage, credible mentions and consistent brand signals - also strengthen your AI visibility, helping your brand appear more often in AI-generated answers and overviews.

How does it differ from traditional PR?

While traditional PR focuses on a mix of online and print or broadcast media, digital PR is entirely geared towards online platforms.

The tactics behind both, however, are similar - strong storytelling, relevant outreach and a clear understanding of your audience.

Digital PR should be complementary to PR programmes, not competing. Both play a role in building brand visibility and trust. What's different is the intent and methodology.

Digital PR tends to be backed by keyword research and gap analysis and focuses on increasing online visibility, improving rankings for keywords and driving traffic to your website, with securing backlinks from high authority websites a key goal. This foundation is also helpful to AI visibility as well as reinforcing authority, credibility and trust signals.

The way digital PR is measured also differs; the focus is on monitoring backlink quality and assessing the influence of the programme on things like search rankings and web traffic.

So when your audience is typing into a search engine for solutions, your brand is discoverable and credible.

Why does it matter for B2B tech brands?

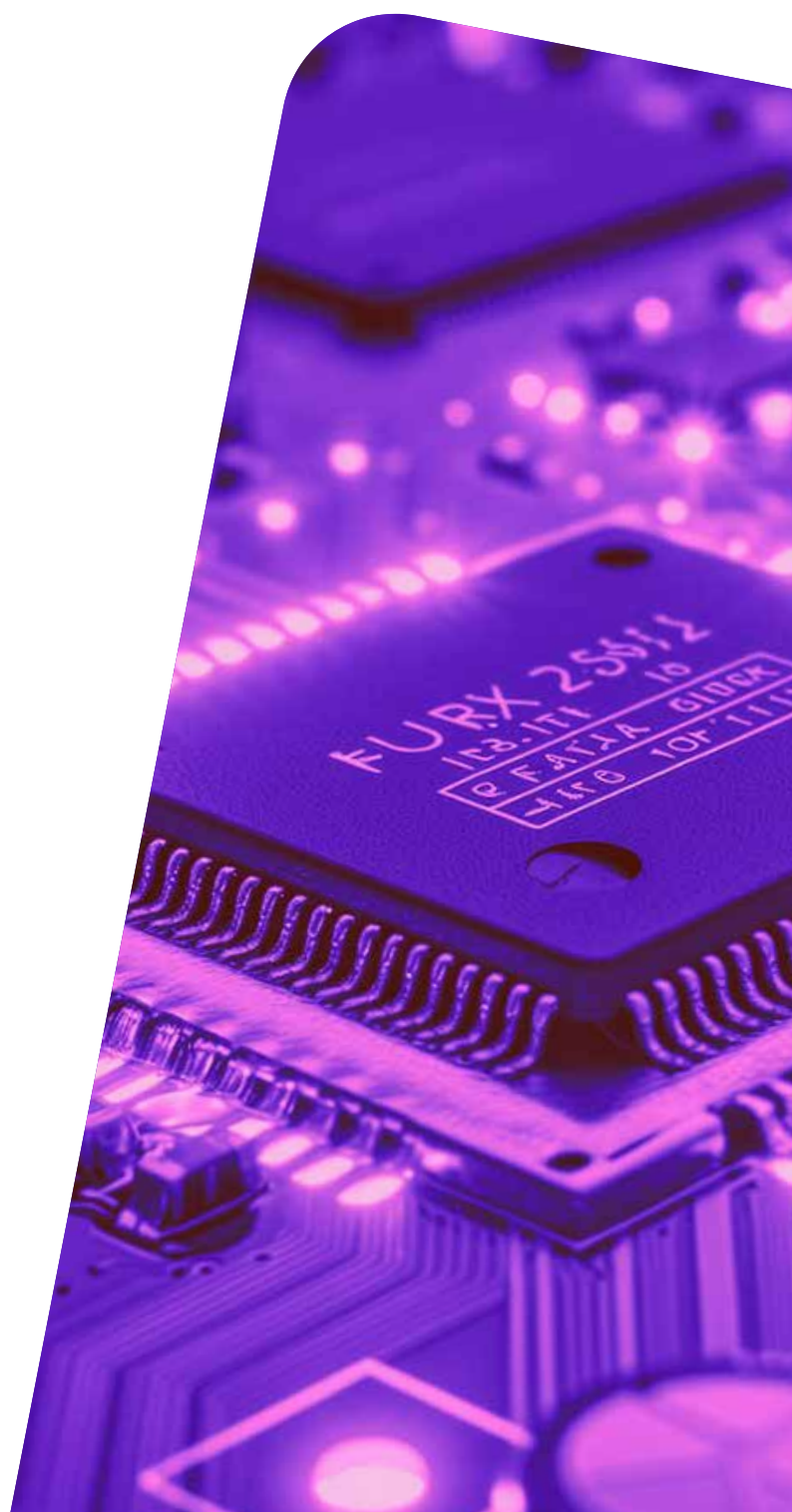
For B2B tech brands, digital PR plays a key role in building trust and authority in competitive markets. So when your audience is typing into a search engine for solutions, your brand is discoverable and credible.

While Performance PR can do a lot of the legwork in building reputation and credibility, digital PR helps you become discoverable, and GEO helps you stay visible in the next wave of search.

By creating keyword-optimised content, earning domain authority-boosting backlinks and maintaining a credible presence across both traditional and AI-powered channels, digital PR strategies improve visibility, trust and long-term performance.

It's not either, or

When combined with a Performance PR approach, digital PR and GEO extend your reach, reinforce your messaging and deliver measurable results across every channel, making it an effective and future-proof B2B PR programme.



3.

Ground your strategy in data



Sophie King
Associate Director

Digital PR builds visibility. It helps your brand show up where your audience is already looking. But visibility alone is not enough. To hold attention, you need credibility and that comes from having something solid to say.

When every brand is publishing the same “we think this”, “don’t do that”, “we’re the best” stories, it all starts to blur into the background. If you follow suit, you won’t stand out.

Original data can give your content substance, credibility and lasting value in the minds of your audience.

It is also one of the few strategies which compound over time. Strong research gets cited, shared and referenced for months, even years. Turn it into an annual trends report and people will begin to anticipate it, strengthening your reputation with every release.

Owned research is your chance to offer something genuinely new and position your brand as a thought leader.

What is owned research and why is it valuable?

Owned research is data your company gathers first-hand, working with the right partners to conduct a survey or study. Unlike secondary research, it allows you to explore the specific challenges or trends relevant to your audience. The result is insight that’s unique to your brand - data you own, control and can turn into compelling stories across every channel.

Here’s what that might look like in practice:

- A survey of 500 CIOs found that 70% say AI pilots fail before reaching production
- A benchmark study of 300 mid-market firms revealed that only 20% rate themselves ‘digitally advanced’ despite rising spend
- An analysis of 10m security alerts showed that 40% of incidents are still caused by human error
- Brand X’s annual Downtime Report 2026 uncovered that the average outage costs UK businesses £120,000 per hour

Owned research is your chance to offer something genuinely new and position your brand as a thought leader. But its real value depends on how well it’s integrated into your wider marketing strategy.

When used effectively, the findings can shape everything from press releases and whitepapers to social media campaigns, helping your brand stand out as a credible, authoritative voice in its sector.

To make sure your research delivers lasting impact, you need to plan how it will be used and shared. Here's how to maximise its reach:

Repurpose content across platforms: Don't confine your research to one format. While the classic eBook can serve as a hero asset within a lead generation campaign, there's real value in repurposing key findings into blogs, short videos or podcast episodes. Each channel reaches a different part of your audience and helps your insights travel further.

Coordinate with PR outreach: Use your research as a hook for media engagement. Pitch the findings to relevant outlets and industry publications, offering exclusive insights or commentary. This can open the door to earned media coverage and position your brand as an expert voice in your field.

...it's not only about the data itself, it's about what you do with it.

Align with your event calendar: Let your research shape event participation and messaging. The insights can form the backbone of panel discussions, speaking opportunities or event activations. It's a simple way to stand out and reinforce your thought leadership in person.

Engage with influencers: Industry influencers and commentators can help amplify your message. Collaborate with them to share results on their platforms and extend your reach to new, highly relevant audiences.

Starting a research project from scratch can feel daunting, so to ensure it produces tangible results, keep these points in mind:

1. Plan for headlines from the start

Start with a clear view of what success looks like. Think about the key insights or headlines you want the media to take away. Without this focus, you risk ending up with generic data that doesn't resonate. Consider what your audience cares about and where the industry conversation is heading. Build your research around those gaps.

2. Get senior stakeholder buy-in early

Research takes time and resources, so get senior support from the start. Their input helps shape the direction and ensures the findings align with wider business goals, increasing long-term impact and relevance.

3. Define success metrics

Before the research begins, decide how you'll measure success. Media coverage, social engagement, lead generation or downloads all give different views of impact. Setting KPIs upfront makes it easier to track performance and optimise for future campaigns.

Turning research into results

Owned research is a powerful way for B2B technology brands to stand out in a competitive market but it's not only about the data itself, it's about what you do with it. When integrated across PR, content, social and events, owned research strengthens your credibility and fuels engagement across multiple touchpoints.

By following best practice and setting clear goals from the outset, you can turn data into stories, research into relationships and insight into measurable impact.

4.

Make leadership part of the PR engine



Hayley Goff
Chief Executive Officer

Too often, PR is asked to perform miracles with no visibility of business priorities and no seat at the top table. It doesn't work. Communications should always start where decisions are made.

When PR and leadership are aligned, everything changes. Messaging lands more clearly, consistently and with purpose. When they're not, expectations go unmet and confusion follows. Securing buy-in from the senior leadership team (SLT) may feel ambitious, but it makes all the difference.

So how do you bring them in?

Start with open conversations

What are the business priorities? Where is the leadership team trying to take the company? Extracting this information, including ambitions, challenges and tensions, is essential. A well-run communications strategy workshop gives structure and can help turn input into clear messaging pillars and company narratives. These should underpin every communication: PR, social, sales enablement and internal comms.

Translate inputs into strategy

Once the priorities are clear, your PR team needs to shape them into a strategy which speaks directly to business goals, with KPIs to match. The SLT should see and shape the plan not just rubber-stamp it, but test, challenge and take ownership of it. The best strategies are those the whole leadership team believes in and feels part of.

The SLT should see and shape the plan not just rubber-stamp it, but test, challenge and take ownership of it.

Build distinctive leadership voices

Early involvement also makes it easier to develop thought leadership which feels credible and personal. These pieces should show how each leader thinks, what they see in the market and how they want the business to be perceived. One-to-one sessions help surface original perspectives and sharpen arguments, especially when part of a wider content plan.

Keep the rhythm

Engagement doesn't end when the plan is signed off. Regular check-ins should track progress against agreed KPIs, course-correct if something is not landing and confirm the comms team is focused on the right priorities. These sessions should be short, honest and jargon-free, reinforcing the value of comms and keeping leadership invested.

The result: reach and cohesion

When your leadership team is fully engaged, you'll see the impact; content is sharper, messaging is more consistent and outputs can be used across sales, recruitment and internal communications. It allows you to tell your business' story from the inside out, starting at the top and echoing across the organisation. Alignment like this does not happen by accident, but when it does, results speak for themselves.

5.

Win over your CFO



Adam George
Finance Director

It's one thing to explain PR performance to the senior leadership team. It is another to explain it to finance, where every line of spend is questioned.

For your paid marketing peers, this is easier. ROI is clear and results are directly measurable. PR, by contrast, often gets treated as a “creative expense” with intangible value. That makes it tempting for CFOs to shift budget to channels that can show a cleaner return.

The solution is to present PR as a strategic, measurable business investment. And with Performance PR, you can.

Fixed fees mean predictable spend, easier forecasting and no surprises.

Fixed fees for fixed outcomes

If you're working with your PR team on a retainer model, it can create uncertainty and drive costs up without a defined return. But with a 'fixed fees for fixed outcomes' model this changes. Targets are set, agreed and aligned with your business' goals, all backed by a service level agreement. If the targets are not met, your money is returned.

This will be music to your CFO's ears! Fixed fees mean predictable spend, easier forecasting and no surprises. It means every pound is tied to measurable impact and it means your PR activity becomes an accountable, transparent and value-driven tactic, not an open-ended cost.

Tie PR to business goals

CFOs are driven by commercial results, which is why with some types of PR and marketing it can be difficult for them to see the value of these activities. But when you build your communications strategy around commercial goals such as market expansion, growth in share of voice or talent acquisition, your CFO will be able to see the wood from the trees.

Clear KPIs and performance reporting

This leads us on to measurement. It's the bread and butter of any senior finance professional. The inability to measure the success of any spend means it becomes more difficult to justify. However, when you have clear KPIs agreed up-front and concise reporting throughout a campaign, your PR spend ceases to be deemed 'a money pit', where results are difficult to define.

Consistency that protects long-term value

PR isn't a tap you turn on and off. Stop-start campaigns waste money and erode brand equity. If your agency adopts an 'always-on' approach, it becomes easier for your CFO to calculate the benefits and long-term growth provided by consistent and long-term partnerships.

6.

Put your leaders in the spotlight



Zachary Harford
Associate Director

“People buy from people” is a phrase often used in B2B.

Today, your buyers are not just looking at your brand, they're looking at the people behind it. They're checking your LinkedIn before they meet you; journalists are searching for expert sources in your vertical; potential hires are weighing up whether they want to work with you based on your digital footprint. They all want to see the people behind the brand.

As we explored in part 4, bringing leadership into your PR foundations early is critical. When the senior team helps shape the narrative, messages land more clearly and everyone moves forward with a shared sense of purpose. But for a strategy to truly connect, buy-in isn't enough - your leaders need to be part of the story.

Leadership visibility goes hand in hand with leadership alignment. When the senior figures of your B2B tech brand are visible, they bring authority and authenticity which your brand channel just doesn't have. They become trusted sources of insight, ambassadors for company culture and build stronger connectors with stakeholders.

Visibility builds trust, and trust drives action.

Trust becomes a competitive advantage

In markets crowded with similar products, services and claims, trust is often the deciding factor. Decision-makers want reassurance that the people they'll be working with are credible, informed and engaged. So when leaders share their expertise and perspective publicly, whether on LinkedIn or in the media, they make that trust easier to build, and it becomes harder for competitors to undermine.

Opportunities start to find you

Media interviews, panel spots, industry awards, even judging roles don't happen by chance. They come from being visible, active and present in your field. Journalists and organisers look for experts already showing thought leadership and authority. The more you put leaders forward as a credible source, the more those opportunities come back to them. It becomes a virtuous cycle.

Visibility strengthens your talent pipeline

Top talent wants to work for leaders they admire. When executives are known for their expertise and values, they naturally attract candidates who share those values. This not only helps to improve the quality of new hires, but also reinforces your company culture from the top down.

It amplifies the brand work you're already doing

Brand PR, marketing campaigns and corporate messaging are vital in building visibility, but are even more effective when they're supported by strong personal voices from within the business. Leadership visibility adds a human layer that helps brand messages resonate and inspire action.

Why now?

The digital landscape is noisier than ever as AI-generated content continues to flood feeds, making it harder for generic corporate messages to stand out. Meanwhile, LinkedIn's algorithms continue to give individual profiles more organic reach than company pages and, as has long been the case, journalists look for credible individuals to quote rather than anonymous brand statements. For B2B organisations, this has created a window of opportunity. Companies with visible, trusted leaders will set themselves apart in every possible way: awareness, influence and impact.

Ready to reset?

A PR reset should be about regaining focus, helping leadership, finance and long-term strategies to align and performance to compound.

When these elements work together, messaging becomes clearer, teams pull in the same direction and activity links directly to commercial outcomes. The result is stronger relationships, measurable progress and campaigns which deliver over the long term.

Throughout this guide, we've explored what that alignment really looks like.

It starts with PR, your early warning system. The first place to spot whether messaging, media and measurement still connect.

It builds through leadership; when senior figures shape, back and embody the strategy so that communications land with purpose and consistency.

It strengthens with support from finance; proving value through fixed outcomes, measurable KPIs and predictable investment.

And it evolves through onboarding new performance-compounding strategies - whether that's using digital PR, AI visibility or owned data to build credibility and discoverability.

If you're feeling the pressure from underperforming campaigns, squeezed budgets or shifting business goals - that's your sign. Because if your current agency isn't helping you do all of this, it might be time for a change.

So what are you waiting for? Hit that reset button.

See how Whiteoaks' Performance PR can help you align goals, prove impact and deliver lasting results. Get in touch at hello@whiteoaks.co.uk to find out more.

whiteoaks
INTERNATIONAL