

PR Search Checklist: 10 Traits To Seek In A Publicist

By Matt Baron

Got a clear picture of what you are looking for in a publicist? Don't know where to begin? Are you somewhere between those extremes?

Consider the following 10 traits as you move toward your PR future:

1. A Passion For The Process

Does your prospective publicist convey an authentic passion for what he does and what he can do to serve you?

2. Numerous Referrals/Case Studies

Does your prospective publicist have a strong roster of satisfied clients, with supporting testimonials and case studies?

3. Stellar Educational/Professional Background

Does your prospective publicist have a strong educational and professional background with a well-documented history of success?

4. No-Fee, No-Obligation Initial Consultation

Does your prospective publicist offer a no-fee, no-obligation initial consultation?

Does your prospective publicist offer immediate value to you during that first meeting—sharing ideas and insights that you can implement, even if you don't retain them?

5. Enthusiasm and Belief In You

Does your prospective publicist exude genuine enthusiasm for you, your organization, and the qualities that set you apart from others in your field?

6. Confidence In Abilities

Does your prospective publicist try to lock you into a long-term contract, or do they project confidence that once you hire them, you won't be looking around for a replacement, anyhow?

7. Well-Developed Media Connections

Does your prospective publicist have a strong network of media contacts that they've cultivated over the years, either by working alongside them in the media, or by connecting effectively with them via previous PR campaigns?

8. Hands-On Attention From An Experienced Pro

Does your prospective publicist deploy seasoned professionals on your account, or do they have inexperienced junior account managers handling the bulk of PR duties?

9. Ongoing Access & Communication

Does your prospective publicist have a built-in structure in which you will receive not only regular updates on the status of their efforts, but also a pledge that they will respond swiftly to your requests for dialogue and other information?

10. A Strong Support Team

Does your prospective publicist have, either on staff or through an independent network, a team of professionals who can meet your needs in a wide range of disciplines, including web design, photography, event promotions, law, accounting, and organizational development?

*For more than 20 years, Matt Baron, founder of Chicago-based **Inside Edge: Public Relations & Media Services**, was a staff and freelance reporter for small-town weeklies, big-city dailies and national magazines. Through workshops, webinars and columns, Baron has trained thousands of reporters and PR professionals how to tell stories more effectively. You can reach him at Matt@InsideEdgePR.com or 708.860.1380.*