



AN INTRODUCTION TO **DIGITAL PR**



How to leverage off-page SEO to improve
your rankings and brand visibility

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An abstract geometric design featuring several overlapping circles and a central triangle, all rendered in a light cream color against a teal background. The design is partially obscured by the large text 'INTRODUCTION'.

INTRODUCTION

Most marketing tactics have had to adapt to this hyper-digital world, and public relations is no different.

Public relations (PR) used to be known for seeking out the highly-desirable 'front page above the fold,' but nowadays, we're vying for the more current 'home page above the scroll.'

Scoring earned media for a client isn't a novel concept, but the value of earned media has shifted in the wake of the digital era in unsuspecting ways. One of those ways is the symbiotic relationship public relations has developed with search engine optimization (SEO). We call this relationship 'digital PR.'

The way these two channels are interrelated have provided brands with an avenue to increase their rankings within Google's search engine results pages (SERPs), as well as increase brand awareness and visibility via placements on high-tier publications that their target audience is consuming.

This guide covers all things digital PR, including what it is, how it can benefit your brand and how to implement it into your digital marketing strategy.





WHAT IS DIGITAL PR?

Section 01

Digital PR is the combination of digital marketing and traditional public relations to digitally promote a brand for a multitude of benefits, such as increased SEO rankings and brand awareness.



Digital PR is usually conducted through the production of a creative campaign or linkworthy asset page. The goal of digital PR coverage is to create high-quality content that is then covered by a high-tier news publication which links to the brand's domain. Achieving these 'backlinks' can support organic visibility growth while also promoting key messaging about your brand and relevant topics it has the authority to speak to.

But why are backlinks important? It's simple. Google analyzes several different criteria when deciding a domain's ranking within the SERPs. One of these criteria is the backlink profile, or the amount of relevant, high-authority sites linking to a certain domain. Digital PR works to build that backlink profile to improve a domain's SEO.

While Google is always updating its algorithm to ensure searchers yield high-quality results, links have remained a key way for brands to show Google that they have authority over a given topic and should be ranked high within the SERPs.

In fact, Google recently rolled out its Spammy Link Update, announcing that it will further punish brands with spammy links to their site, increasing the need for strategic digital PR to build high-quality links.

How do digital PR and traditional PR differ?

Digital PR and traditional PR both strive for earned media from journalist-led press publications. Though similar in many ways, there are many differences as well.

The main difference between both strands of PR is that digital PR focuses on building links. Traditional PR focuses on more traditional outlets such as print, radio, and television, and puts a greater emphasis on brand-led PR such as event coordination and crisis management.

On the other hand, digital PR has a specialized focus on building links, with a desired outcome of gaining backlinks on high-tier, online publications – this includes asset creation and puts a greater emphasis on content-led PR. Digital PR also comes with digital measurement, in which tangible results can be analyzed in real time. Though different in outcome, the two can still work together, symbiotically, for the same brand.



HOW DIGITAL PR CAN BENEFIT YOUR BRAND

Section 02

Digital PR has a multitude of benefits ranging from digital to more traditional.

Digital PR Campaign

- PR Led blog post
- Interactive infographic
- Game/quiz
- Product launch
- On-brand ranking
- Expert commentary

High DA Sites

Recommended for advertisers who use a partner platform (i.e. GTM).

Increased Visibility

- Main Domain Authority
- Keyword Rankings
- Visibility on the high-authority publications

Increased Traffic

More organic visits as a result of being more visible in SERPS and increasing online presence

Increased Leads & Conversions

The more visits to site, the greater the potential for conversions

The crossover between digital PR and SEO has given brands the ability to take a double-pronged approach to their digital presence.

Brand awareness

Digital PR allows marketers to create interesting and newsworthy content that can fill headlines and syndicate across the internet. This increases brand awareness as readers are exposed to the brand, its products, and other content.

Brand authority

As these articles are shared with links to the brand's domain, it then improves the backlink profile of the domain and increases its authority and rankings within the SERPs.

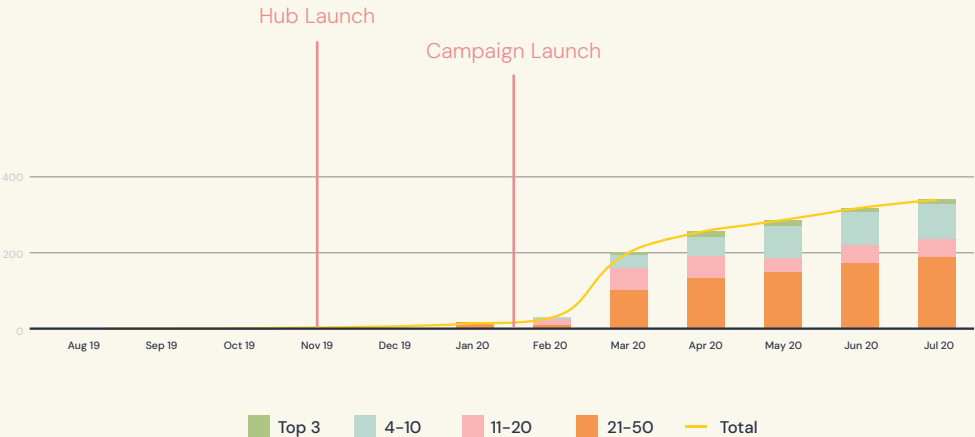
Sustainability

As opposed to paid media, the results of digital PR are more sustainable. One campaign can produce a variety of media placements and links that will continually pass relevance onto your domain. And, if done correctly, one campaign can continue to gain links over several months or even years, as opposed to always having to pump money into a paid media strategy.

Case Study

Real estate company Rightmove tasked Croud with creating an efficient content strategy. Our team created a content hub with useful onsite articles that answered users queries, however, additional support was needed in driving more visibility and traffic to the content hub.

This is where digital PR played a role in the success of this strategy. By creating a [home extension calculator](#) which was outreached to press with multiple newsworthy headlines, we managed to yield an impressive amount of media coverage. As a result, Rightmove saw 136 keywords pushed into the top positions within the SERP. Additionally, these pieces of content benefited from increased visibility within the SERPs since they sat within the same content hub as our previously produced content.



WHERE DOES DIGITAL PR FIT INTO YOUR OVERALL MARKETING STRATEGY?



Section 03

The most common ways brands implement digital PR into their marketing strategy are through their organic or PR teams.



If your focus is SEO improvement, your organic team can implement digital PR tactics to build links to your domain to improve SERP rankings. This is usually done in tandem with onsite SEO such as content creation and technical improvements. At Croud, we offer these end-to-end SEO services to provide a holistic approach to improving SERP rankings.

If your goal is to improve brand awareness and consideration, your PR team can implement digital PR tactics to create a buzz around your brand, product, or service. This could be an online campaign around a product that's trending on TikTok or an infographic showing how your brand fits into the greater news cycle. At Croud, our digital PR team works together with client PR teams to ensure the focuses and execution align perfectly.

Regardless of your goals, digital PR can be used to improve your brand and overall bottom line.



HOW TO EXECUTE A DIGITAL PR CAMPAIGN

Section 04

The execution of a digital PR campaign is key to the success it can yield, particularly with regard to quality and speed.

Digital PR is mostly done through creative campaigns made for the purpose of attaining high-quality links. Though the process is always changing and being reinvented, digital PR campaigns usually include the following steps.

1

Ideation

Create a detailed brief that forms the basis of your ideation and research. Validate ideas with internal teams.

2

Research & Data

Once an idea is signed off, start the production process by gathering all necessary research and data required for the content piece.

3

Design

Once all the data is in place, start to bring it to life with a design that tells the story of the piece in the best way possible.

4

Development

Interactive development can bring a design to life and really help to tell the story in new and interesting ways.

5

Outreach

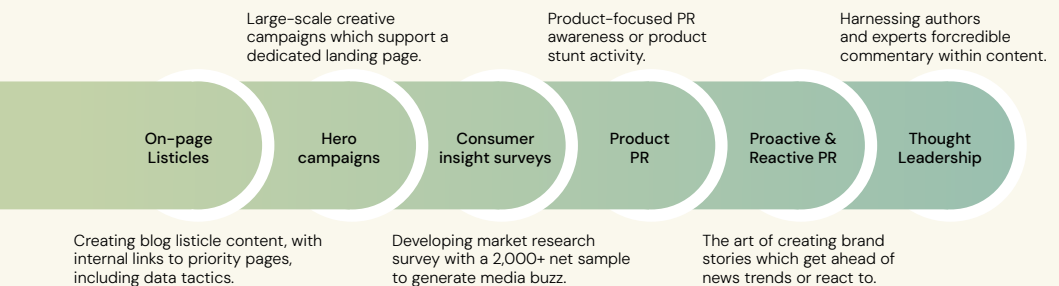
Build a prospect list of relevant journalists at publisher sites and produce professionally written press releases. Create any extra assets journalists might require.

Ideation

Like most things in marketing, every digital PR campaign starts with a great idea. We begin our work with clients by reviewing their goals and objectives, along with the vertical they sit in, their target audience, and the publications they have the potential to be featured in.

Campaign ideation can be used via third-party PR tools to help analyze brand-relevant and newsworthy topics that can be successfully implemented for digital PR. A few notable factors analyzed are things such as topic volume, keyword searches, and overall trending news.

A key part of ideation is considering the multitude of campaign formats. A campaign may perform differently due to several factors such as format, vertical, newscycle, and the publication being pitched. At Croud, we consider several factors when choosing campaign format to ensure it is the best fit for the client's topic and vertical.



Once topics and formats are considered, raw ideas are fleshed out based on press hooks and client goals, and then refined via a tangible execution plan for each idea. Once an idea is chosen, you can then move to the production phase.

Production

After an idea is chosen, it's time to produce the campaign. This usually begins with gathering the data and information that are key to telling the story. Once gathered, it's time to tell that story in a visually appealing way with visual elements – this can be through the use of infographics or graphs, to name a few.

For some larger campaigns – hero campaigns – an interactive page might be produced. If this is the case then you would usually require the assistance of a front end developer in order to code this.

Once the page is approved on all fronts, it's time to pitch the campaign to media outlets.

Outreach

Your digital PR content is only as good as how well it's amplified. If you've created an amazing campaign but skimp on the outreach, it will not yield the desired results.

The first step in the outreach process is identifying the press hooks the campaign contains. Ideally, each campaign has multiple press hooks, and these are often identified in the ideation phase and then further refined in the production phase. Once you've outlined the press hooks, you build a media list of relevant journalists.

Building a media list is a key part of the outreach phase because you want to ensure that you're pitching the campaign to the journalist with a beat that perfectly aligns with the content you're pitching. Unfortunately, 2 in 3 journalists say the pitches they receive are irrelevant, so take the extra time to identify journalists that will potentially cover your story. Using third-party pitching platforms such as Roxhill (UK), Muck Rack (US), or Cision (US) can make this process much easier.

Once the media list is built, it's time to hit send on the pitches. Media pitches should be 100% perfect and free from any mistakes. Ideally, journalists prefer media pitches to be 200 words or less and to get to the point right away. Don't beat around the bush or use complex language. Share the biggest press hooks instantly and explain to the journalists why this story should be covered. Also, don't forget to follow up! It's customary to follow up once or twice after the initial pitch is sent, but no more than that.

Reporting

After the pitches and follow-ups are sent, it's key to monitor the media for coverage along with monitoring your inbox. Field any journalist inquiries as soon as possible to help ensure coverage occurs, being extra helpful and attentive to help create a positive working relationship with the journalist.

Most third-party pitching tools come with high-tier media monitoring alerts that ensure that you see every media placement that you've scored. Once these media placements come in, share them with your client and celebrate the links you've built for their domain.



SUMMARY

Digital PR can benefit your brand and domain in multiple ways.

With SEO improvements and increased brand recognition and awareness, digital PR takes a multi-faceted approach to digital marketing. Allow your domain to compete within the SERPs and continue to grow your target audience through the implementation of digital PR.

If you're interested in implementing digital PR into your overall marketing strategy, please [get in touch](#) with Croud's digital PR team.

About Croud

Croud is a global, full-service digital agency that helps businesses drive sustainable growth in the new world of marketing. With a rich heritage in performance, we apply that mindset to everything we do; brand planning, strategy, integrated media, social, creative, and data.

Founded in 2011 with the mission to reinvent the agency model, we combine 500+ in-house digital experts with a global, on-demand network of marketing specialists. This agile, scalable model gives us more time to really understand our clients' businesses, and deliver truly incremental growth.

Part of the Croud Group, which also includes luxury specialists VERB Brands and social-first agency Born Social, Croud is proud to partner with leading global brands, including Audible, Vans, IWG, and AllSaints.



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