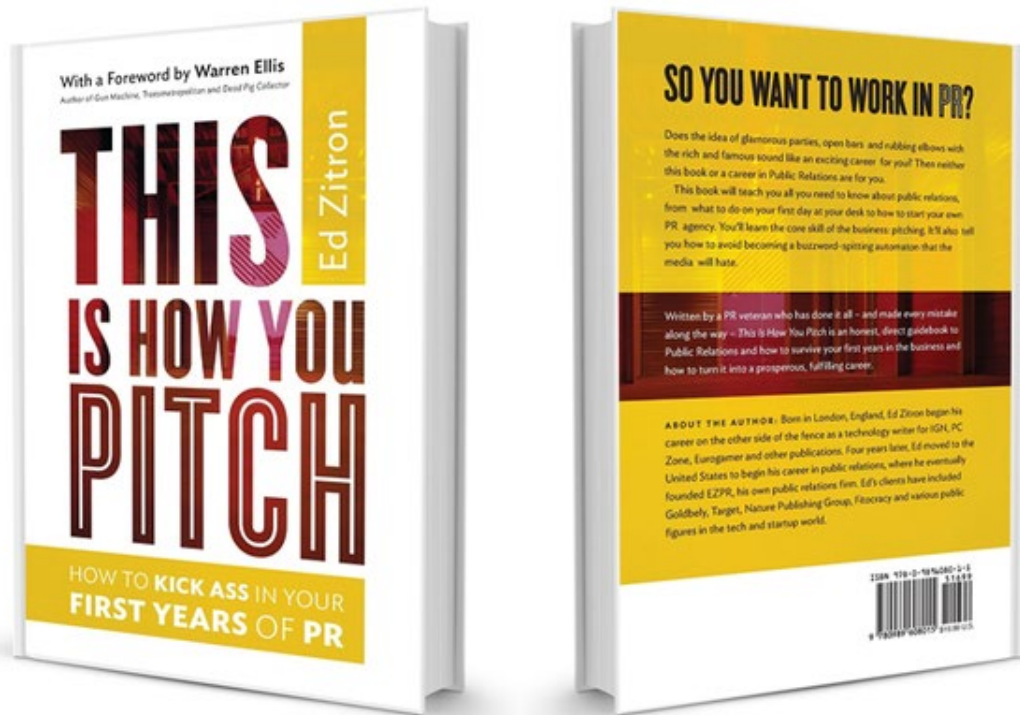


How to Be Successful in Your First Years of PR

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The book *This is How You Pitch: How to Kick Ass in Your First Years of PR* by Ed Zitron is an easy read about the different aspects of public relations. His casual writing style presents case studies and relatable content that allows the reader to feel comfortable learning about their possible future in the PR world.

I have put together a couple takeaways from this informative book:

PR is not what is seen on TV.

Movies and shows portray public relations specialists as rich partiers who attend events all the time. They make the job seem full of glitz and glam. However, this is not the case. PR involves dealing with complex problems, handling issues that deal with empathy, diplomacy, creativity and a lot of hard work.

PR professionals are also displayed as hard and aggressive people in movies and shows. This is also not the case. Ed Zitron says that when you start working in PR you should “treat everyone around you like they are going to start talking about you the second you leave.” In PR you are representing your reputation and your clients, so you need to act like it.

You are in the business of reputation management.

When working in PR, it is all about how your client relates to the public. The main part of this is their reputation. You must guard your client’s reputation because there is no amount of money that can purchase a good one or repair a bad one.

A person or company with a good reputation is more likely to fix any public problems they face, and they additionally get the benefit of being perceived as someone who is worth listening to. With a good reputation, their opinions – and therefore their products – have value.

As their PR specialist, you should be searching your client online and on social media to see what people are saying. You should also have access to your client’s social media accounts to check what people are saying and clean up any messes or seize any possible opportunities.

Become the buffer and the bullhorn.

You will need to become the buffer and the bullhorn between the client and the public.

As a buffer, you will keep the client’s private lives private. You are trusted with their private information and you become what stands between privacy and publicity.

As the bullhorn, you will be the voice and the main channel for audiences to find out what is really happening with your client. You release the information that the client wants out and that will help their brand.

When the media wants to know information that is not in your client’s best interest, you will be both the buffer and the bullhorn. The type of information they are searching for will help you determine when to be which.

Dealing with your clients.

There are multiple different client archetypes that you will need to know how to deal with.

First there is the ever-shifting client. This client is one of the most challenging to work with. They are indecisive and are constantly coming up with new ideas and new business plans because they are not confident in their brand. When changing all the time, there is no way to

measure success. You must be firm with these clients. Let them know that you want them to succeed and that they must stick to one plan to remain on the right path.

There is also the demanding client, who is surprisingly the easiest client to work with because they are engaged. However, they might be afraid that the work you are doing is not going to pay off so they may overwork you. You must set boundaries with this client and let them know they can trust you and that you will get your work done.

There is also the “whatever” client, the popular client, the unreachable client and the flaky client that you can read more about in Ed Zitron’s book.

Pitching is the bedrock of PR.

In PR, the goal of pitching is to get in and get out as quickly as possible with the results you want. You are not there to communicate everything all at once, but to get the results you want fast.

The reader determines your pitch. All that matters is what the reader wants to hear and what they need to know. This will guide your pitch.

Before pitching, you must also do your homework. You need to be knowledgeable about the industry you are covering, and about journalists and PR firms in your space.

Your pitch should be a story. This story is what you want reporters to write about your client. Additionally, each pitch should be written individually for each person, each time and not just copied and pasted for everyone.

Building your own PR empire.

Networking is a large way to build your empire. It will help you not only find people you can trust, but also find people willing to pay for your expertise. There are also more ways to build up your business.

You should first get online. Start a website and get your name and information out. This will let people know what services you provide, why a client needs your services and how you will work with them.

As a new specialist, you can also start small. Helping local companies will let you be able to build up your portfolio and have little risk for your reputation.

Finally, you should strengthen your knowledge. Start reading and learning everything about everything that interests you. You want to be knowledgeable and a good person to talk to. This will allow you to be more enjoyable on and off the job. Being noted for your intellect and personality is a definite competitive advantage in PR.