

MY 16
GOLDEN
RULES
OF PR



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MY 16 GOLDEN RULES OF PR

I've worked in PR, corporate communications and brand marketing for three decades. I've launched more businesses, initiatives, careers, shows, events, artists and space probes than I can remember.

I've sent billboards into space, launched underground farms, trained 4-star generals on how to fight the Cold War on social media. I've boosted sales of foods and soft drinks by hundreds of percentage points, fought and won battles with regulators, turned start-ups into household names and delivered world-wide news coverage for stunts that cost less than £20.

I've lectured international MBA students on guerrilla promotion, I've featured on radio, TV and national newspapers talking about marketing, PR and promotion.

I'm a safe pair of hands and I'm great at sleight of hand. I help brands and people be heard, rather than part of the herd.

These are some of the things I've learnt over the years. They won't necessarily solve your marketing or PR need or fix your reputation, but they might help you to frame the problem and look at it in a different way

The best advice I can give anyone who is planning to use publicity to boost their brand is 'be fast, be brave and be thorough'.

James Goldsmith once said, "If you see a bandwagon, it's too late." I'd say that if you see a bandwagon, you should run as fast as you can in the opposite direction.

Here goes:



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1

IF YOU CAN'T TELL THE GIST OF YOUR STORY IN A TWEET, THE CHANCES ARE IT'S TOO COMPLICATED

Attention spans are in freefall. The calls on our attention are, at the same time, rising exponentially. The sum total of human knowledge now doubles every year. Being interesting isn't optional. You need to defy the laws of physics in that 140 characters. It isn't easy, but it's necessary.



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WHEN NECESSARY, MAKE A VIRTUE OF YOUR WEAKNESS

If you're in a bad place, think about what got you here and whether there might be a way of turning that to your tactical advantage. In martial arts it is common to use your enemy's power and momentum against them. Look at what Tommy Wiseau, the 'mastermind' behind *The Room* (widely thought to be one of the worst films of all time), has done here:



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NOTHING IS BORING IF YOU SHINE THE RIGHT LIGHT ON IT

In my time, I've made positive international news out of plastic packaging, a call centre menu obsessive and the world's most boring conference. There is always something interesting to be found. If you can't, you just haven't tried hard enough.



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OUR MAIN TASK AS PR PRACTITIONERS IS TO MAKE THE SHARER SEEM SMARTER OR QUICKER OR FUNNIER

News and social media are Pavlovian instruments. The people who share what we create are motivated by reward. Sometimes, these rewards are prominence in a paper or on a programme or on a web page. Sometimes, they are food pellets in the form of retweets, shares and likes. A great story or a great idea or a great insight has the reward baked in.



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PERCEPTION MINUS REALITY EQUALS PR VALUE

This is your equation. In a market in which your business competes with other similar businesses, who stands out and why? My bet is that it'll be the one that invests the most effort in PR.



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YOU SELL HOLES, NOT DRILLS

The old marketing analogy. It's the outcome of your product or service, not the product or service itself, that matters to the customer. That's also where the best stories can be found.

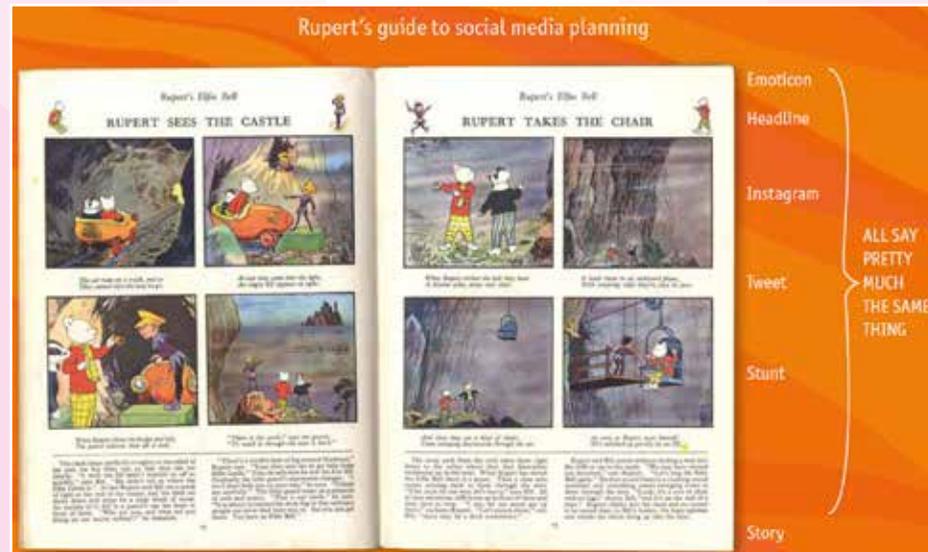


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BEFORE YOU INVEST TIME AND EFFORT IN SOCIAL MEDIA, READ A RUPERT BEAR ANNUAL FOUR WAYS

There's the headline at the top of the page, the Instagram picture, the short rhyming Tweet beneath the picture and the broadsheet report at the bottom. Each story is the same. You just need to make sure that you create all four versions before you get started. There, that's saved you a few quid.



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'CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES' WERE DREAMED UP BY THE WRITER OF THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Do I need to explain this one? What is content? Oh yeah, it's the ideas, i.e., the most important part. The delivery methods are all sorted now. Each of us has more delivery methods on our phones than most organisations do. The world is designed for sharing. Park that bit. It's already fixed. Spend more time and effort on the ideas.



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NOTORIETY IS NOT THE SAME AS FAME; IT IS MORTALITY MASQUERADING AS INVINCIBILITY

On the face of it, it's easy to see how some people might get confused. They go on a reality TV programme, say something controversial, and hey presto, they're a media star. They say a few offensive things and they confuse notoriety for popularity and audience outrage for passion. Here's a very old Instagram picture. If you look closely you'll see Icarus crash landing in the sea in the bottom right. That's the end game for the notorious. Trump, Hopkins, Y...



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IN THE PRESENT WE ARE ALL FAMEISH FOR 15 MINUTES

We all have the means at our disposal to be be fameish: brains, coffee, smartphones. Choose your moment and choose it wisely. Notoriety is unnecessary. Authenticity is essential.



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TRADITIONAL POLLING IS DEAD

Remember all those ancient modelling techniques? ACORN analysis, etc? They're dead. The idea that you can make assumptions about people based on where they live is bunkum. Desmond Morris said once, standing in a suburban street, "This used to be your community", before reaching into his pocket and producing a Filofax. "Now this is your community" he said. He was on the right lines. Geography no longer matters. Where we live makes little difference. We no longer take our cues from our neighbours. Our niche interests and opinions are no longer niche. We roam in digital tribes.



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DO IT NOW

At the moment you have a fresh idea, 7,343 people are having exactly the same idea. If it's a good one and it makes sound sense, do it now. Don't hesitate. Ideas have a very short half life. The role of a great PR practitioner is to furnish an endless supply of them.



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A 12-MONTH PR STRATEGY IS A WORK OF NEAR TOTAL FICTION

Change goes from 0 to 60 in no time. You can't second-guess the world in one month, let alone six or twelve. Think back to this time last year and then fast forward to now. It all looks a bit different, doesn't it? Have measurable goals and aspirations that are fairly fixed and work to those.



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THE BEST PR WORKS LIKE A TROJAN HORSE

Your messages are the Greek soldiers inside the horse. If the messages aren't integral to something that is already (and independently) compelling, it won't work terribly well.



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**BUILD A GIANT PRAWN OR SHEEP
WITH A VERY LONG USE-BY DATE**



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RULES ARE MEANT TO BE BROKEN



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**IF ANY OF THIS HAS STRUCK A
CHORD, DO SHARE. I'D BE GLAD TO
HEAR YOUR VIEWS, TOO.**

