

Hell no, that's not PR



By [Adam Hunter](#), issued by [Hook, Line & Sinker](#)

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I loved PR Daily's article titled, '*10 Falsehoods about PR*' with my favourite quote being, '*Spin to PR is what stupid is to Albert Einstein.*' As PR's 110th anniversary approaches, I thought it would be fun to highlight the piece and question our local industry leaders for their comments, thoughts and input.

For many, the confusion about PR is apparent and something we face on a regular basis; from my personal experience of being offered flyers to hand-out at Spar on weekends, to my partner introducing me as a PA at social gatherings - the confusion clearly exists.



Back in 1906, modern public relations pioneer, Ivy Ledbetter Lee, released a declaration of principles which provided important groundwork for us communications professionals to follow. The statement was seen as a significant move to true public relations.

The declaration reads, in part: "*This is not a secret bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency. If you think any of our matter ought properly to go to your business office, do not use it. Our matter is accurate. Further details on any subject treated will be supplied promptly, and any editor will be assisted more carefully in verifying directly any statement of fact. In brief, our plan is frankly, and openly, on behalf of business concerns and*

public institutions, to supply the press and public prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which it is of value and interest to public to know about."

According to PR Daily, here is a wonderful checklist of things PR is not:

1. PR is not spin (or lies or misrepresentation).
2. PR is not marketing or advertising.
3. PR is not 'blink' or 'flash-in-the-pan' - in other words, it's not about one night stands, it's about building relationships that last.
4. PR is not about kissing your ego and buttering you up with sycophancy.
5. PR is not about 'targets'.
6. PR is not about 'penetration' / penetrating markets and audiences.
7. PR is not just about 'audiences'.
8. PR is not a popularity contest.
9. PR is not about attacking and scapegoating.
10. PR is not just words, it's also action.

For me, the biggest offender is the *Spin Doctor* definition, since we all know and understand that spin actually refers to pure 'BS'. And since we act and communicate with integrity and take years to build our credibility and faith with media and stakeholders, it should definitely be top of the 'What PR is not' list. It's also easy to see that sometimes content between marketing, advertising and PR can overlap but at the end of the day, it boils down to the basics that PR educates, creates awareness and informs.

Perhaps we are also perpetrators in the sense that, due to time constraints and a number of different client pressures and demands, we promise that our expertise can provide a quick solution, when in fact, the 'relations' part of our job title stands

for something that is not built overnight.

According to Robert White, the author of the article, he very cleverly says; "we know and understand that PR is about dialogue, discussions, sharing information and knowledge. It takes responsibility for its actions and words and holds itself accountable, alongside and synchronised with its organisation which does the same. PR is focused on integrity, evidence and transparency. Words matter, as do actions. Together, done responsibly and well, they embody all of us at our best, including PR. To fail in one or the other is to fail in both, as both count and one is nothing without the other."

What is your experience and understanding in the matter - share and tell us what you think PR is not.

ABOUT ADAM HUNTER

Hook, Line & Sinker (HLS) is an award winning content agency that helps fellow brands across Africa to find the right hook and deliver the ultimate marketing and communications sinker!

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