



## Nicola's Outlook

As the UK emerges from recession, is it wise to spend money managing corporate reputation? Yes, it is. Nobody buys products or services from suppliers they don't know or don't respect, least of all when their budgets are tight. A good reputation is, therefore, the first essential step to making a sale. But it's also worth remembering that a reputation is not what an organisation says about itself but is what others are saying about it. With so many independent and informal conversations taking place online, it's getting harder to earn a good corporate reputation and even harder to maintain it.

That's why one-way message delivery won't work any more for either consumers or business customers. An honest two-way dialogue is what's needed and the careful monitoring of reputation on and off-line. But it's virtually impossible, of course, to have a continuous personal relationship with all your customers and stakeholders. This is where PR can really help. By using the most respected trade, consumer and regional media plus all that the Internet has to offer, PR can help you can build valuable interactive relationships with the people that matter. And not just through the media. A direct e-marketing strategy is an effective way to build virtual relationships, taking people at the right time in the right way towards the sale. To do this effectively, you need advice from a PR and marketing communications practitioner who understands your business, your industry context and what motivates your customers.

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*“Nicola understands how to reach customers creatively. She works out who is likely to buy, where they are and what will interest them.”*

**Sales Director, North Dales Leisure Parks.**