

Viroslava Novosylina: How to adapt PR strategies for the international market

IT business needs to change in order to expand. Viroslava Novosylina, founder of SLOVA Tech PR, tells how to adapt PR strategies for the international market.

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Almost two years of full-scale war have forced Ukrainian IT to change. Companies are revising their development strategies and entering new markets: the EU, the US, and the Middle East. More than two dozen representative offices have opened in Poland alone. Other popular export destinations for IT services are the United States, Malta, and the United Kingdom.

However, expansion is not limited to organisational issues and studying the competitive environment. For long-term success, one has to build flexible PR strategies adapted to new realities.

Reputation starts with communication

Integrated PR is primarily about building reputation and trust. The tech business faces high competition and relies on the long-term effects, this is where reputation plays a key role. The first contact with the media, potential customers, partners, and investors can be crucial for the dynamics a business will gain in a new market.

Entering new territories comes with the challenge of facing competition

with the local players. They have the advantage of history, a customer base, and an established media image. They also have an advantage in localising their products to national peculiarities or languages and know the specifics of the local audience better.

The newcomer has to present a smoothy running business, successful cases, teamwork, and market interactions.

Venture capitalists will also appreciate this over time. Good publicity can increase the attention and interest of investors, though it is not a key factor. Reputation works in tandem with the product, financial, and team performance and correct target audience setting.

If the target investors are venture capitalists, media exposure can help founders who do not have a strong investor network get more visibility.

Investors pay attention to founders with PhDs or previous experience in management positions in large companies. Such punch lines are good for reinforcing public communication.

Three components of a PR strategy for entering a new market

Preparation for effective communications should begin with an analysis of the information environment. Largely, PR strategies are based on classic components that do not differ from country to country: goals, objectives, emphasis and key messages of communication, competitor analysis, taboos and barriers to communication, and potential topics and formats.

The following three components are the basis for the fastest possible entry into the new information space, which we have been using in our PR agency in recent years. In short, the formula is as follows: Company's face - leader or person representing the company in communication + client's

cases + newshooks and actualisation.

The first two components guarantee maximum coverage and quick strategy implementation but rarely reach the top-list media.

The third component requires a greater time investment and manual adjustment, including building connections with the journalists from the targeted media. Coverage in the general media serves as the brand knowledge base for the targeted media.

Let's take a closer look at each component:

- Image PR. A company should have a face. Humanity and openness of communications is a must-have trend that affects the further choice of customers. Tell stories from the perspective of the company's founders and specialists to demonstrate expertise in your niche. It will be the key to creating a brand image that users, partners, and potential investors can trust. The well-known *MacPaw* company is directly associated with the achievements of its founder, *Alexander Kosovan*. In turn, *Mykhailo Fedorov's* public voice and personality strengthen the work of the Ministry of Digital Transformation. A strong personal brand of the founder should also attract potential customers to the company. Investors will pay more attention to this indicator than any other.
- Client cases. Talk about successful projects and present impact to build trust and credibility. Don't wait for the news stories, create them. One way is to communicate with journalists and offer expert columns and media cases to niche and local media that focus on a narrow range of topics and have a loyal audience. Such cases also allow the company to get into specialised listings, ratings, and other awards. It is the springboard for mentions in Forbes.com, TechCrunch, or The Clutch.
- Pitching to the top-list media. Investments, company entry into the

market, internal and industry research - this is not a complete list of vectors and news that may interest world-renowned journalists. To get them you need to prepare a newsworthy story submit it in the right timing context, and be patient in getting reactions and answers.

Another format of interaction with foreign media is newsjacking. It means keeping track of current news and industry trends and providing journalists with expert comments and insights.

Any PR strategy should combine and test different approaches, be relevant to the market, and anticipate potential crisis issues and responses.

Getting published in a new media market takes time and persistent communication. However, minimal media presence comes quite soon, helping to build further communications.

Sound PR strategies help Ukrainian companies enter new markets more confidently and consolidate their positions, becoming worthy competitors and strong industry players. Such cases include *Nova Poshta* and *Nova Pay* entering Poland, Romania, and Moldova, or *Ajax Systems*, opening a plant in Turkey. However, communication is a living process that is constantly transforming. Trends and newsworthy events require a flexible and timely response from brands. Demonstrating the potential of a startup, and the expertise of its founders and experts, is an important component of building a reputation.

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