



## **Public Relations: Choosing the right provider - by Harry Zlokower**

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Whether it is on an employee or contractual basis, selecting the right PR assistance requires care and caution. In narrowing your selection, consider above all skills and experience, the prospective hire or firm's work ethic, chemistry and cost.

None of this is easy, but the time and effort placed on an evaluation process will reap more benefits and fewer frustrations in the long run. Good PR reps and firms understand these requirements and

will cooperate to the fullest if convinced you are not simply “window shopping.”

New York has a strong offering of real estate PR practitioners and firms of all sizes. You can identify these providers through referral, networking, advertisements, listings and Googling techniques. Consider your needs and budget and then test your conclusions through preliminary interfacing with potential partners. Generally PR firms like to bill monthly retainers that can range anywhere from \$2,500 to \$10,000 a month or more with separate tabs added for specialties like social media, digital and content marketing, newsletters, websites, collateral materials and other kinds of marketing. Some will also consider charging by the project, for example publicity for one or more deals, promoting a new office, or launching a business or service.

Once you have your act together, invite in three to five candidates that seem to fit your criteria. Have them sign a confidentiality agreement and then give them as much information about your business and needs as you can in order to make a proposal, followed by conversation. Consider how much effort the prospective PR reps have made to understand and explain how they will work and produce for you, examples of their previous work and earned media results, and equally as important, how well they will relate to you in the day-to-day rigors of problem solving and publicity work.

Harry Zlokower is a real estate public relations consultant based in New York.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540