

# Bribing and corrupting the media?

Some PR companies believe that hand-delivering expensive gifts to journalists will buy more copy space than a newsworthy event introduced by an informative press release and useful pictures... Is this a true reflection of the bribability and corruption of the media?

Why do PR companies deem it necessary to spend clients' money on delivering expensive gifts to the media when inviting them to a function or conveying news about the company - surely, if the event is newsworthy, an email with the relevant information should suffice to draw the press, and if it is not newsworthy, it should not deserve to receive any publicity.

Could it be that PRs have so little faith in the company/product that they represent that they fear that nobody will be interested in the news - but hope that a gift would make the media feel guilty enough to publish something.

In other words, bribe them.

If this is the case, it is a sad reflection on the state of the media, who are seen to be willing to be used to promote an un-newsworthy cause for the sake of a personal gift.

Is that not corruption?

I regularly receive gifts from PR companies accompanying press releases that are so badly written that it takes some serious reading to realise that the products are totally unrelated to our magazine. An absolute waste of the client's money.

I recently received an electronic toy, which must have cost a packet, with an invite that was so lacking in detail that I did not realise that I should have taken an accomplished photographer instead of my "mik & druk" nor that it was a half day event instead of an one hour presentation. None of the PR people could provide the names, titles and contact details of people to follow up... but we all got a nice "going home" gift.

On the other hand, I very much appreciate emails from PRs who keep me abreast of developments relevant to our magazine. Especially, since they give me all the details required for a story, tell me what's going to happen when inviting me to an event, send images in the correct dpi, and give me the contact details so that I can follow-up on the story in the press release.

What's more, because they do not waste their client's money on "bribes" to individuals but use cost-effective emails, their clients have money left to spend on advertising. Another indication that they fully understand the different roles of the media (to convey news) and advertising/PR (to market the company or product).