



# The PR Hiring ToolKit 2024

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The PR Hiring Toolkit | New York 2024

A comprehensive kit to help build your ideal public relations team in 2024 by knowing what it takes to attract top talent in your market.

After more than a year of layoffs, hiring freezes, and a tentative hiring landscape, the 2024 PR market is marked by an abundance of available talent. As companies refocus their priorities and consider the growth of their communications teams, employers find themselves in an ideal situation to add incredible talent to their organizations. This climate presents a unique opportunity to attract top-tier PR professionals seeking new opportunities. With a deep pool of skilled candidates, savvy employers can be highly selective in identifying the ideal cultural and technical fit for their organizations. However, competition for the most sought-after PR talent remains fierce. Crafting an enticing employee value proposition across areas like compensation, growth potential, and workplace flexibility will be key to landing and retaining the brightest minds in the 2024 PR landscape.

To land the right talent, employers must ensure they remain competitive in what they offer potential employees across key areas such as compensation, learning opportunities, flexibility, culture and meaningful work within the company.

Understanding candidates' wants, needs, and desires will give savvy employers a significant advantage in the war for PR talent—not only in sourcing and hiring but also in retaining top performers.

New AI-powered tools and automation are reshaping the PR landscape. While these advancements won't replace skilled professionals, the ability to leverage them will be a key differentiator for top talent. The ideal PR candidate profile in 2024 will likely possess a blend of exceptional communication skills and technical proficiency in utilizing new technologies.

This comprehensive toolkit equips you with the resources you need to navigate the 2024 PR market when looking to fill open PR positions. It includes recommended 2024 salary ranges to remain competitive and insightful interview questions tailored for different PR roles.



### **Agency Salary Benchmarks (according to PR Week) 2023 vs 2024:**

The following data was compiled from PR Week's 2024 Salary Survey. TW Search Partners believes the salary levels are mostly accurate, though the SVP and EVP levels are skewed towards the lower end of the current market. Current SVP salary ranges are from 225-275k, while EVPs can expect a range of 300-500k+.

#### **Position 2023 / 2024**

- AE (Account Exec) \$57,000 / \$65,000
- SAE (Senior AE) \$67,850 / \$75,000
- AS (Account Sup) \$85,000 / \$91,000
- SAS (Senior AS) \$96,700 / \$102,700
- VP \$147,000 / \$150,000
- SVP \$185,000 / \$194,000
- EVP \$235,000 / \$255,000

### **In-house Salary Benchmarks (according to PR Week) 2023 vs 2024:**



## Position 2023 2024

- PR Specialist \$60,000 / \$62,000
- Digital/Social Strategist \$65,000 / \$70,000
- Manager \$85,000 / \$93,000
- Senior Manager \$113,000 / \$118,000
- Director \$115,000 / \$121,000
- Senior Director \$153,000 / \$156,000
- VP \$225,000 / \$240,000
- SVP \$265,000 / \$270,000



### **Crafting Compelling PR Job Descriptions in 2024**

In today's competitive job market, a well-crafted job description can make all the difference in attracting top PR talent to your agency. As the communications landscape evolves, it's crucial to craft job postings that accurately reflect the dynamic nature of modern PR roles while resonating with the values and aspirations of exceptional candidates. Here are some key strategies to consider:

#### **Highlight the Agency's Purpose and Culture.**

Leading candidates seek more than just a job - they want to be part of an organization with a compelling purpose and positive workplace culture. Use the job description to convey your agency's mission, values, and unique value proposition. Showcase what sets



your culture apart, whether it's a commitment to DEI, professional development opportunities, or employee wellness initiatives.

### **Emphasize Strategic Responsibilities**

While listing core duties is still important, focus on outlining the strategic aspects of the role. Describe how the position will contribute to developing innovative PR campaigns, shaping brand narratives, and driving measurable business impact for clients. Emphasize opportunities for creative problem-solving, strategic counsel, and thought leadership.

### **Spotlight Digital and Data-Driven Capabilities**

As PR becomes increasingly digitized and data-driven, highlight the digital and analytical skills required for success. This could include proficiency with social media management tools, media monitoring platforms, data visualization software, or campaign measurement and reporting capabilities.

### **Underscore Desired Soft Skills**

Technical expertise is essential, but don't overlook the importance of soft skills in PR roles. Emphasize qualities like exceptional communication abilities, emotional intelligence, adaptability, critical thinking, and the capacity to build and nurture relationships with clients, media professionals, and internal teams.

### **Showcase Growth and Development Prospects**

Top talent is motivated by opportunities for personal and professional growth. Outline potential career paths within your agency, as well as any formal training programs, mentorship initiatives, or support for continuing education and industry certifications.

### **Convey the Agency's Brand Voice**

Craft the job description in a tone and style that authentically reflects your agency's brand personality. This not only attracts candidates who are a strong cultural fit but also demonstrates your team's ability to craft compelling messaging.

By implementing these strategies, your PR job descriptions will effectively position your agency as an employer of choice, enticing the industry's top professionals and setting the stage for a seamless hiring process.

## **50 Traits for Top Performing PR Professionals**

### **Communication and Interpersonal Skills (15):**

- Exceptional written and verbal communication abilities
- Excellent listening and comprehension skills
- Ability to simplify complex topics into clear, compelling messaging

- Strong interpersonal skills to build rapport with media, influencers, and clients
- Articulate and polished presentation capabilities
- Collaborative team player able to work across cross-functional groups
- Ability to tailor communication style for diverse audiences
- Professional demeanor and executive presence
- Comfort with public speaking and engaging with external stakeholders
- Strong negotiation and conflict resolution skills
- Ability to provide constructive feedback
- Persuasive storytelling abilities to promote narratives
- Diplomatic approach to sensitive situations
- Strong relationship-building and networking talents
- Emotional intelligence and ability to read situations

### **Strategic Vision and Creative Thinking (10):**

- Strategic mindset to develop innovative PR campaigns
- Ability to analyze data/metrics to optimize communications
- Forward-thinking approach to identify emerging trends
- Creative ideation skills to develop unique concepts
- Strong understanding of different PR tactics and channels
- Resourceful problem-solving capabilities
- Comfort embracing new technologies and digital platforms
- Ability to navigate crisis situations with poise
- Big-picture perspective on business objectives
- Experience developing multi-channel content strategies

### **Industry Knowledge and Execution (10):**

- Deep understanding of the PR and communications landscape
- Up-to-date on current events, news cycles, and cultural conversations
- Strong media relationships and networking abilities
- Proven success executing multi-faceted PR programs
- Experience with relevant PR tools and software platforms
- Organizational talents to manage multiple workstreams
- Comfort operating in an agency or in-house environment
- Adaptability to seamlessly pivot strategies as needed
- Attention to detail in all deliverables and execution
- Drive to stay ahead of evolving PR/marketing trends

### **Additional Traits (8):**

- Intellectual curiosity and continuous learning mindset
- Ability to think strategically and articulate a vision
- Comfortable presenting to and influencing senior leaders
- Strong ethics and commitment to transparency
- Passion for the client's/company's brand and initiatives
- Positive team-oriented attitude to motivate others
- Strong work ethic and personal drive to exceed expectations

## **Integrity and Professionalism (7):**

- Impeccable integrity and ethical standards
- Commitment to protecting proprietary information
- Discretion in handling sensitive communications
- Meticulous attention to factual accuracy in all materials
- Professional demeanor able to remain poised under pressure
- Dedication to meeting deadlines and commitments
- Respectful approach toward all internal/external stakeholders



## **Sample Interview Questions**

### **Technical Experience:**

- How have you adapted your PR strategies to meet changing industry trends?
- What is your understanding of the role you're applying for?
- What unique value can you bring to our PR team if hired?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in this PR role?



- How do you stay current on the latest PR tools, platforms and technologies?
- What other day-to-day activities are you involved in that we haven't discussed?
- In what ways has your experience prepared you to take on greater responsibilities?
- Can you describe how you've utilized technology to improve PR efforts?
- Explain your understanding of how AI is impacting the PR industry today.
- How do you see AI tools complementing the role of PR professionals in the future?

### **Behavioral:**

- What was the toughest PR challenge you've faced? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about the most difficult PR project you've tackled and your solutions.
- What is your process for overcoming PR roadblocks when they arise?
- Describe an event that really challenged you from a PR perspective.
- How do you react when feeling overwhelmed by your workload?
- Tell me about a time when management changed direction on a program.

### **Soft Skills:**

- What was the most difficult ethical PR decision you've had to make?
- Give an example of facilitating major change within an organization.
- How did you convince others of your point of view on a PR initiative?
- How important is collaboration with other teams in your PR role?
- What challenges do you face working cross-functionally? How do you address them?
- Give an example of a project requiring coordination across levels.
- Tell me about convincing people with no formal authority over them.
- Describe needing to understand others' perspectives before executing PR tactics.

### **Leadership:**

- What kind of mentoring/training style do you have with direct reports?
- Tell me about inheriting an underperforming PR team - scope and approach?
- How do you typically monitor your team's performance and results?
- How do you address unacceptable results from your direct reports?
- Describe convincing your team to change an established process.
- How do you facilitate decision-making when no policy exists?
- How important is onboarding/training for new PR hires?
- What steps do you take to get new team members ramped up?
- How do you analyze training needs for your team or individuals?
- How do you ensure your team understands their impact?
- Tell me about rallying your team during a difficult situation.
- How did you communicate a strategy shift to your direct reports?
- Describe your leadership style for managing a PR team.
- How do you conduct performance reviews?
- What is your involvement in the organization's strategic PR planning?
- How do you quantify and measure your performance as a manager?

### **Motivations & Goals:**

- How do you approach work from the standpoint of balancing your career with your personal life?
- What motivates you? What are you trying to accomplish at this point in your career?
- What quality do you admire most in people?
- What plans do you have to improve your professional performance?
- How do you approach achieving goals for yourself?
- Tell me about a time when you came up with a new PR idea or process. How did you get it approved and implemented?

### **Strengths & Achievements:**

- What have you done in your present/last position to increase your organization's or client's media visibility or reputation?
- What PR initiatives have you led to drive business impact or bottom-line results?
- Give an example of cost-saving PR efforts vs. initiatives to improve the PR function.
- What do you consider your biggest career accomplishment in PR so far?
- What are your biggest professional strengths as a communications professional?
- What has been the highlight of your PR career to date?
- What is your favorite PR activity or specialty area?
- Name five reasons for your success in the PR field.
- What do your direct reports or team members see as your key strengths?
- What positive feedback do you tend to receive from managers/leadership?

### **Weaknesses & Challenges:**

- Walk me through your last performance review - what areas needed improvement?
- Looking back, how could you have enhanced your performance in a prior role?
- What are some of your biggest professional weaknesses or areas for development?
- What has been the most challenging period in your PR career so far?
- What have been some of your biggest mistakes and key learnings?
- What might your direct reports or former managers say are areas of weakness?
- What have been the biggest frustrations or setbacks you've faced in your career?
- What are the most difficult aspects or problems in your day-to-day PR work?
- Tell me about a goal you struggled to achieve and how you handled that situation.

### **Job Experience:**

- What was your favorite PR position and what made that role so rewarding?
- What was your least favorite position? How did your manager impact that experience?
- What aspects of your PR work do you find most crucial or impactful?
- How would your last supervisor rate your ability to adapt to change or shifts in priorities?
- What parts of your PR roles have you enjoyed the least over the years?
- Describe your ideal PR job if you could create the perfect position.
- What factors do you feel enable a PR professional to progress at a growing company?
- Describe the characteristics of the best manager you've had in the PR field.
- In what areas do you wish your previous managers had provided more guidance?

- How do you see AI and new technologies complementing the skills of PR professionals?



### **Social Media/Digital Skills Assessment:**

#### **Sample Questions:**

- Describe your approach to developing a social media strategy for a new product/service launch. What channels and tactics would you prioritize?
- Walk me through how you would plan and execute an integrated digital PR campaign across owned, paid, and earned channels.
- How do you measure and analyze the success of social media campaigns? What metrics are most important?
- Give an example of how you've worked with online influencers or communities to amplify a brand message or initiative.
- What content formats and multimedia storytelling techniques have you leveraged in your PR/social media work?

**Practical Exercise:** Provide a real or hypothetical negative social media post about the company/client. Have candidate draft a response plan outlining their approach across channels.

#### **Media Relations Simulations:**



**Mock Crisis Scenario:** A PR crisis erupts over a product recall, executive misconduct, or other controversial situation. Role-play how the candidate would respond to challenging media inquiries.

**Spokesperson Prep Exercise:**

Give background on a new company initiative. Have the candidate prepare messaging, talking points, and Q&A to brief a spokesperson before a media interview.

**Media Pitching Role Play:** Assign candidate to pitch a fictitious product/service to an interviewer acting as a reporter from a target media outlet.

**Industry Trends and Hot Topics:**

**AI Content Creators:**

How could the rise of AI language models and content creation tools impact the PR industry? Discuss potential implications like:

- Content quality, authenticity, and attribution challenges
- The role of human creators vs AI assistance
- Intellectual property and copyright considerations
- AI content governance and risk mitigation strategies

**DE&I in Campaigns:** Assess the candidate's knowledge of DE&I best practices in modern PR like:

- Inclusive messaging and avoiding stereotypes/biases
- Reaching diverse audiences and communities
- Highlighting underrepresented voices and perspectives
- Driving organizational DE&I commitments transparently

**Agency vs In-House Considerations:**

**For Agency Roles:**

- How would you balance the needs of multiple clients in terms of time management and prioritization?
- What experience do you have working with external vendors/partners to support client campaigns?
- Describe how you would onboard and get up to speed on the needs of a new client account.

**For In-House Roles:**

- How would you work cross-functionally to align PR efforts with other marketing/business priorities?
- What's your experience navigating the approval processes within a larger enterprise organization?

- How do you balance long-term brand reputation management with shorter-term product PR cycles?

**Agency Work Sample Review:** Provide real or mock client briefs/plans and assess samples of:

- Client-facing presentations, pitches, or reports
- Multi-channel campaign assets (press releases, content, etc.)
- Analytics reports showcasing quantifiable results



Want to discuss your specific PR staffing situation in more detail? Set up a meeting so we can understand your unique needs and give you a personalized action plan for your next PR hire.

**To Book a Meeting** → [Click Here](#)

