

PRESS INFORMATION NOTE

PRCAI Launches New Client-Consultancy Partnership Charter to Elevate PR Industry Standards and Collaboration

- PRCAI launches first-ever in India new Client-Consultancy Partnership Charter
- Public Relations Industry continues to grow at 20 percent, reaching ₹2,500 crore
- Three new code of conduct - Request For Proposal, Collaborative Work Environment and AI Guidelines, aim to enhance transparency, streamline operations, and foster stronger client-consultancy relationships

New Delhi, Monday, Aug 12, 2024: The Public Relations Consultants Association of India (PRCAI), a leading body representing communications and public relations (PR) professionals in the country, today announced the launch of its new Client-Consultancy Partnership Charter. These guidelines aim to enhance collaboration and operational efficiency across the industry, highlighting PRCAI's commitment to foster an ethical, professional and progressive industry.

The Public Relations industry is poised for continuous growth, as indicated by the initial findings of PRCAI SPRINT 2024*, the bi-annual industry survey in collaboration with IPSOS, that estimates an industry growth of 19.6 percent in FY 2022-2023, reaching 2,500 Cr. from 2,100 Crore in FY 2021-2022. With that momentum, PRCAI focussed on three key areas such as Request For Proposal, Collaborative Work Environment and Artificial Intelligence code of conduct guidelines that can help further strengthen the industry.

"The Client-Consultancy Partnership Charter is a testament to our commitment to innovate and strive for excellence as the PR industry continues to grow and mature further," said **Deeptie Sethi, CEO of PRCAI**. "These guidelines are not just about aligning client and consultancy efforts but can be a powerful tool to achieve shared objectives and help to have gold standard behaviour spelt out for all to embrace."

PRCAI's new guidelines come at a pivotal moment as the PR industry undergoes rapid evolution. Despite robust growth, the industry in India faces significant challenges, including financial disparities between client budgets and rising consultancy costs, expectation gaps between clients and consultancies, a persistent shortage of skilled talent, and certain operational inefficiencies. The Client-Consultancy Partnership Charter addresses these issues head-on, providing a comprehensive framework to streamline operations, enhance transparency, uphold ethical standards, and improve client-agency engagement.

Neha Mehrotra, National Chair for Standardisation & Growth at PRCAI, said: "The standardisation guidelines are designed to address the contemporary challenges faced by the PR industry and will pave the way for a more cohesive and effective working environment. Through transparent communication, respect for commercial priorities, and the ethical integration of emerging technologies, these guidelines will empower all PR practitioners to deliver superior results with exceptional impact and value."

The collaborative efforts to develop these guidelines have been monumental, where PRCAI brought together 35 industry experts, represented by different size and scale of PR firms and seasoned corporate communication experts through closed door workshops. With a combined experience of 1,000 years, over 100 days, these professionals dedicated 400 hours in crafting

precise guidelines for standardisation. This intense collaboration exemplifies the industry's collective passion for elevating standards and driving positive change.

Minari Shah, a member of PRCAI and director, International (APAC, EU, LATAM) – Owned content & channels, Amazon, said, "This initiative by PRCAI is a positive step forward in professionalising our industry and ensuring that all parties work together harmoniously. The guidelines are the start of bringing much-needed clarity and structure to clients and agency collaborations. By clearly defining expectations and focusing on transparency and accountability, they could help pave the way for stronger and more productive relationships between clients and consultancies."

The three new Client Consultancy Partnership Charter and AI Code of Conduct guideline include:

1. **Standardising Request for Proposals (RFP):** The RFP process emphasises transparency and efficiency. The guidelines in this section highlight the importance of pre-qualifying consultancies, shortlisting three to four based on their credentials. Objectives, goals, and the scope of work must be clearly articulated in detailed communication briefs. The selection process should include defined stages, timelines, and timely updates. Additionally, the guidelines promote transparent compensation practices, ensuring fair treatment of non-shortlisted consultancies by compensating them for their time and effort. A structured induction training program for onboarding new consultancies is also outlined to ensure alignment and excellence.
2. **Building a Collaborative Work Environment:** These guidelines promote a 'One Team' spirit, fostering mutual respect and nurturing collaborative behaviour. Best practices for onboarding consultancy partners include norms for briefs, access to information, and leadership engagement. The guidelines encourage defining mutual goals, mechanisms for productive feedback, and maintaining realistic timelines and work expectations. This ensures continuous business efficiency and supports ongoing learning and development.
3. **AI Guidelines for PR Consultancies:** The guidelines ensure transparency and accountability in AI usage, ethical use of data, bias mitigation, and human supervision in AI-driven processes. They empower users by providing details on AI usage and allowing data control. Continuous learning and improvement focus on assessing AI systems and investing in employee training. The guidelines also outline requirements for strong security measures to protect AI systems and data, and compliance with AI regulations.

"This initiative by PRCAI attempts to build a level playing field for a strong client-consultancy partnership in this new digital era. The AI guidelines are essential for every single PR practitioner, not only for ensuring ethical and responsible use of technology but also for nurturing trust with key stakeholders through a fair and accurate use of data, insights and information," said **Seema Siddiqui, former director of communications, Microsoft India.**

PRCAI encourages its members, including fifty PR firms and several practitioners to embrace the new code of conduct guidelines, which serves as a guiding framework rather than binding regulations. The initiative underscores PRCAI's commitment to promote true partnerships between PR firms and their clients, set clear communications, and follow highest standards of professionalism. For more information on new guidelines visit <https://prcai.org/about-us>

Editor's Note:

About PRCAI: Founded in 2001, the Public Relations Consultants Association of India (PRCAI) is Indian PR industry's flagship trade association and the members share a common goal to instil best practices for the greater progression of the PR industry in India and around the world. Over the years, through consistent efforts and a wide-ranging engagement approach for 150 plus member firms and practitioners, we have embedded ourselves deeply within the Communications industry and also reiterated and showcased the Indian PR industry's strengths to global audiences. Towards this, PRCAI in association with international Holmes Report, brings, SABRE Awards which are the world's largest PR awards program, recognizing superior achievement in branding and reputation in North America, EMEA, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, South Asia and Africa. Visit <https://prcai.org/> to know more.

***SPRINT 2024:** Study of Public Relations Insights, Nuggets and Trends 2024

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