

O'Dwyer's PR Firm Rankings Have Many Benefits

PR firms that are thinking of joining the 2019 O'Dwyer top PR firm rankings should consider the following benefits.

- 1. Third party endorsement is obtained.** This is the bedrock principle of PR—others recognize you. The O'Dwyer Co. has been doing PR firm rankings for 48 years and its name is well known in the business world.
- 2. It proves you are a PR firm.** Complying with the ranking rules, including supplying the top page of your firm's latest corporate income tax return and W-3, establishes you as a PR firm rather than an ad agency or other type of business. PR firms have distinctive financials—at least half of income is used for staff pay. The ranking measures counseling and media contact services, not advertising or production expenses.
- 3. Promote your specialty practices.** PR has moved mostly to the agency side where extensive special practice areas have built up over the past 20 years. For example, O'Dwyer's currently has 70 ranked firms in healthcare and 71 in tech based on '17 fees. Firms are ranked by 12 specialties. Only O'Dwyer's does such rankings which are usually at or near the top in Google searches for those categories.
- 4. Gain year-long visibility.** The O'Dwyer rankings are prominently displayed for a year on odwyerpr.com. Ranked firms are highlighted in the index of firms listed in O'Dwyer's online directory. O'Dwyer's magazine each month highlights one of the specialty rankings.
- 5. Associate with biggest PR firms.** Put your firm on the same list with the largest firms, virtually all of which are in the rankings. Smaller firms are also looked at since there may be account conflicts for some clients at the biggest firms. Some clients also prefer a smaller firm.
- 6. Use your ranking in new business pitches, PR and advertising.** Display the O'Dwyer seal. Stories on your firm posted to odwyerpr.com or the newsletter or magazine will refer to your ranking. Publicize your ranking locally.
- 7. Boost your SEO and Google standing.** Businesses are rated by how many others link to their sites and what kind of sites have links to the businesses. A link on odwyerpr.com gives you a higher search engine optimization rating since the O'Dwyer website is updated throughout the day with original content—a key fact recognized by Google and the other search engines.
- 8. Your recruiting is helped.** PR pros, including those entering the market, want to be with a firm that has the national recognition and data that an O'Dwyer ranking provides. They want to be with a "name" firm.
- 9. Clients tend to go with an established firm** rather than one with little visibility. The O'Dwyer rankings are the basis for scores of PR firm searches and referrals from other firms every year.
- 10. The rankings establish PR counseling as a solid industry,** especially benefiting the ranked firms.

To participate in the rankings, complete form on the next page.



Your firm can be an O'Dwyer ranked firm—a prime new business tool—by filling out the form below and e-mailing it to john@odwyerpr.com. Send top page of latest income tax return and W-3 for 2018. Your ranking will be posted on odwyerpr.com and you can use it in new business pitches. Clients have come to rely on firms in the O'Dwyer rankings.

Deadline for rankings based on '18 fee income: Fri., Mar. 15, 2019

Letter from the CPA of the PR firm as follows: *(This form may be photocopied and used by CPA)*

To the Board of Directors of _____ (city, state) _____:

We have performed the procedures enumerated below, which were agreed to by you solely for the purpose of ranking the PR firm named above with O'Dwyer's based on 2018 results. This engagement to apply agreed-upon procedures was performed in accordance with the standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The sufficiency of the procedures is solely the responsibility of the PR firm. We make no representation regarding the sufficiency of the procedures described below either for the purpose for which this report has been requested or any other purpose. Our procedures were as follows:

A. Net fee income is defined as basically charges for PR counseling and time spent preparing and placing stories in media. Mark-ups for out-of-pocket expenses and mark-ups and/or profits from collateral activities such as graphics, video production, printing, public opinion research, etc., are included as actual amounts. Such amounts do not exceed the limit of 7.5% of total fees. We compared fee income, as defined above, to the appropriate fee billing records and found that for the 12 months ended Dec. 31, 2018:

Net fee income for 2018 was: \$ _____

Net fee income for 2017 was: \$ _____

Percentage gain (loss) was: _____

B. Gross billings for calendar 2018 aggregated _____ (total income plus reimbusables).

C. We determined from the payroll records that _____ employees were employed full-time as of Dec. 31, 2018 (employees who worked at least 35 hours a week and had F.I.C.A. taxes withheld).

D. Wages paid as reported on enclosed form W-3 for 2018 totaled: \$ _____.

E. Enclosed is the first page of the latest Federal income tax return of the PR firm signed and dated by both us (the CPA) and _____ (CEO of PR firm).

F. The PR firm named above is (is not) owned, affiliated or in any way related to an advertising agency or individual owners of an advertising agency or any other company. The name of the parent or affiliated company is _____ (tell what industry the parent company is in).

G. Net fees of the PR firm named above in one or more of 12 PR specialties are given below to rank the firm in that specialty category. We are providing names of accounts to show the firm's expertise in these areas. (fees of specialties cannot exceed total fees of firm.)

Agriculture _____	Financial PR/IR _____	Professional Services _____
Beauty & Fashion _____	Food & Beverage _____	Sports/Leisure _____
Entertainment/Cultural _____	Healthcare _____	Technology/Indus. _____
Environmental/PA _____	Home Furnishings _____	Travel & Econ. Dev. _____

H. List branch office fees/staff on a separate sheet for: Chicago, Connecticut, Boston, Florida, Los Angeles area, Midwest cities, New York & New Jersey, Pennsylvania, San Francisco area, Southeast, Texas, Washington, D.C. area, Western cities.

We were not engaged to, and did not, perform an audit, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion on any of the accounts or items referred to above. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you. This report is intended solely for the use of the specified user listed above and should not be used by those who have not agreed to the procedures and taken responsibility for the sufficiency of the procedures for their purposes.

Signed by outside CPA _____ Signed by CEO of PR firm: _____

Agency contact for this form: _____ phone: _____ e-mail: _____

GENERAL RULES UNDER WHICH ENTRIES ARE EDITED:

Only long-term (six months or more) clients should be listed and they should be active in 2019. PR operations which are units of advertising agencies or partly owned by ad agency employees must indicate this. Affiliates or joint ventures of PR firms should not be listed. **A PR professional's name may appear only once. At least one full-time person must be listed at each branch.** Staff listed at h.q. cannot also be listed in branches. Firms billing more than \$1 million should list at least six PR executives or staff. Only firms that list accounts will be considered for the rankings. Firms that participate in the categories must show at least three accounts in the particular specialty.