

Acorn in the News

September 1995



There has been a lot of discussion in the newsgroups, and a lot of feedback, about the coverage Acorn gets in the press. Kevin Coleman, our Corporate Affairs Manager, who is responsible for our PR coverage, has put together a detailed account of where we stand in terms of our PR coverage and how we go about achieving it.

I would like to underline the point that it is far easier to get good coverage with interesting stories about Acorn computers and how they are used than with basic product-related stories. The more potential stories that we have to work with, the better our chances of getting coverage. So please keep the stories coming. They don't have to be earth-shattering - many quite simple stories are of interest to someone. For example, in the listing of Acorn's press activity for June, one of the items was about Macclesfield College publishing its own Maths book using an Acorn system. So, if you think it may be of interest, send your story to us, either via e-mail: newsroom@acorn.co.uk or post it to: Newsroom, Acorn House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4AE.

Perspective

We are in regular contact with many of the journalists in the national press and have an excellent relationship with a number of them. But, as in any set of relationships - there are some people who like us more than do others. Most journalists, however, have a professional

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attitude to their work and a 'good story is a good story'. When we compare the coverage we obtain to that obtained by other companies in our industry - some of whom are much bigger - our coverage is impressive.

Targeting

Our PR programme is very heavily targeted. For example, we work more closely with Acorn publications on Acorn-related stories than with the PC press (other than news), because the Acorn copywriters are more likely to cover topics about Acorn than are PC journalists. We target the education correspondents in the nationals and the specialist education press to ensure they are aware of our response to issues. Here case-study material such as the Horizon multimedia project, Pocket Book usage and initiatives like New Literacy are important. We have started to use the Risc PC 486 card as a way of getting coverage in the PC press (see Computer Shopper and PCW, other coverage is to follow). We target a different group of the press for stories about Online Media.

Symbiosis

Wherever possible we work to make sure that 'what's good for Acorn, is good for Online Media, is good for ARM'. This means

that when ARM is visited by a journalist, they involve us (which is why I had my picture in the Japanese press recently!). When we have someone appropriate visit the Cambridge interactive TV Trial at Online Media, we involve ARM or Acorn. Olivetti arranges for journalists to visit ATML, ORL, OM, ARM and Acorn - we co-ordinate the agenda.

PR agencies

We use two agencies: Text 100 is one of the UK's biggest agencies and has clients such as Microsoft, Intel and Citizen, to name but three. Most observers consider Text 100 to be the number one high tech PR agency, and I am sure they could give all the right kind of figures to support this. We have two teams, one for ACL and one for OM. They do not work on competitors' accounts.

AD Communications is number one for work targeted at the publishing industry. Most people in this industry trust AD Communications to provide good reliable information, and it has an exceptional list of contacts in the print industry.

Both of these agencies have dedicated high-calibre people who go the extra mile for us. (I know

this because when I phone them at 8.00 pm, there is usually someone there working on something for me.) Each of these agencies has had considerable success and I will give just two examples (OK, three - one for each team!). Text 100's ACL team - four appearances on Blue Peter for Acorn in the last eight weeks, covering PBII and the Internet on the Risc PC; Text 100's OM team - look at the recent coverage in the FT (including the front page). AD Communications - look at June's Creative Technology magazine.

Amount of Information

If you measure PR by the number of press releases issued and the amount of press coverage generated, the results are impressive. I have included a list of ACL's recent press releases and a copy of the March coverage digest (I chose March because April's digest is not yet finished).

In conclusion, thank you for your comments and concerns. We are never complacent and are always busy trying to get good coverage.

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