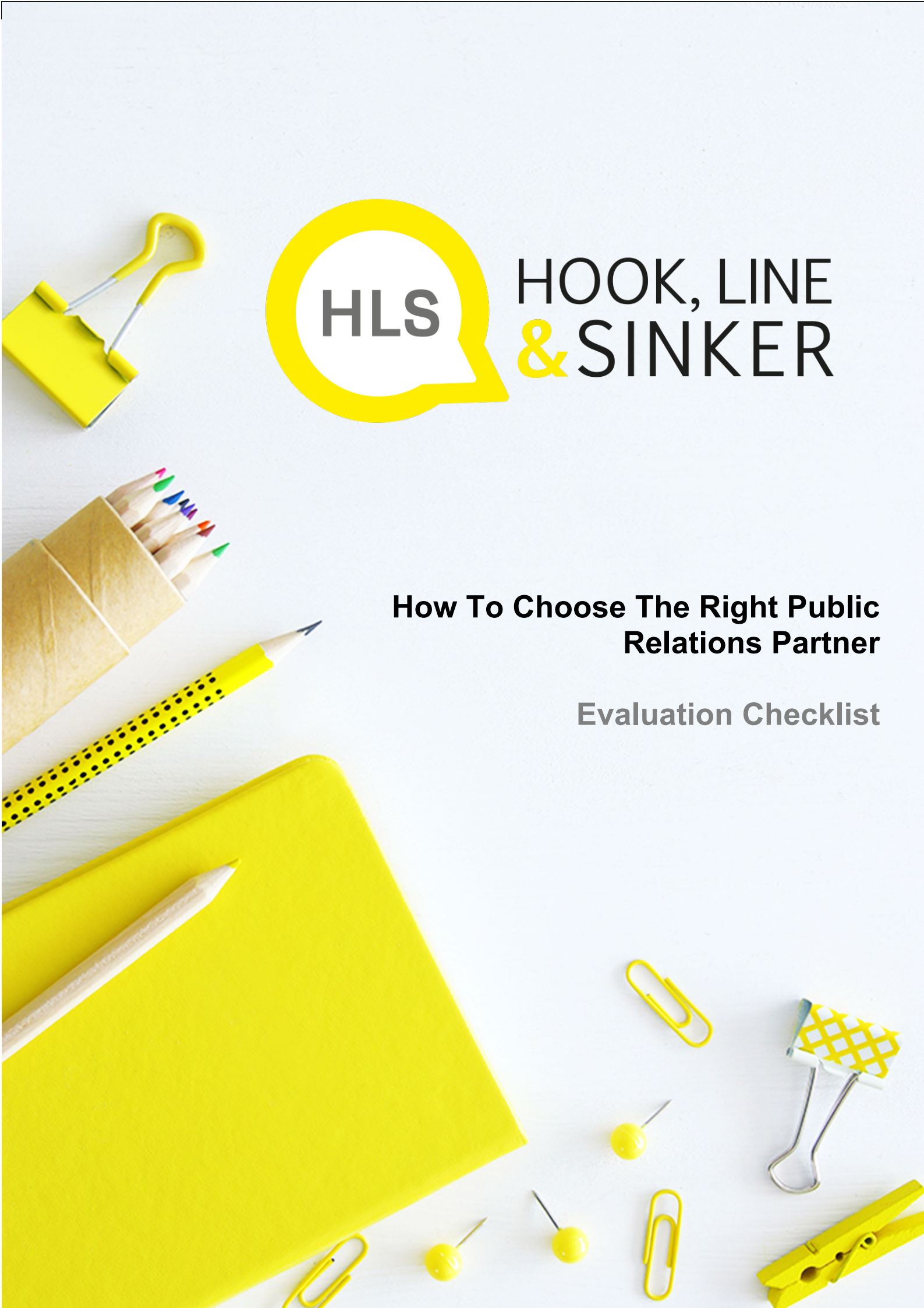


How To Choose The Right Public Relations Partner

Evaluation Checklist



PR Agency Evaluation Checklist

A practical guide for choosing the right PR agency in South Africa

Choosing the right PR consultancy can feel overwhelming. Almost every agency promises strong media coverage and creative campaigns, but the real test lies in strategy, relationships and results. To help cut through the noise, Hook, Line & Sinker has developed a clear and practical PR Agency Evaluation Checklist. Use it as a guide when comparing agencies and selecting a partner that can genuinely support your communications success.

Use the checklist below to compare potential PR agencies before signing an agreement.

Tick the boxes as you evaluate each agency.

1. Strategic clarity

☐ Have we clearly defined our PR objectives and expected outcomes?
☐ Does the agency understand our business goals and target audiences?
☐ Did they ask thoughtful questions about our brand, reputation and strategy during the first meeting?
☐ Have they explained how PR will support our broader marketing and business strategy?

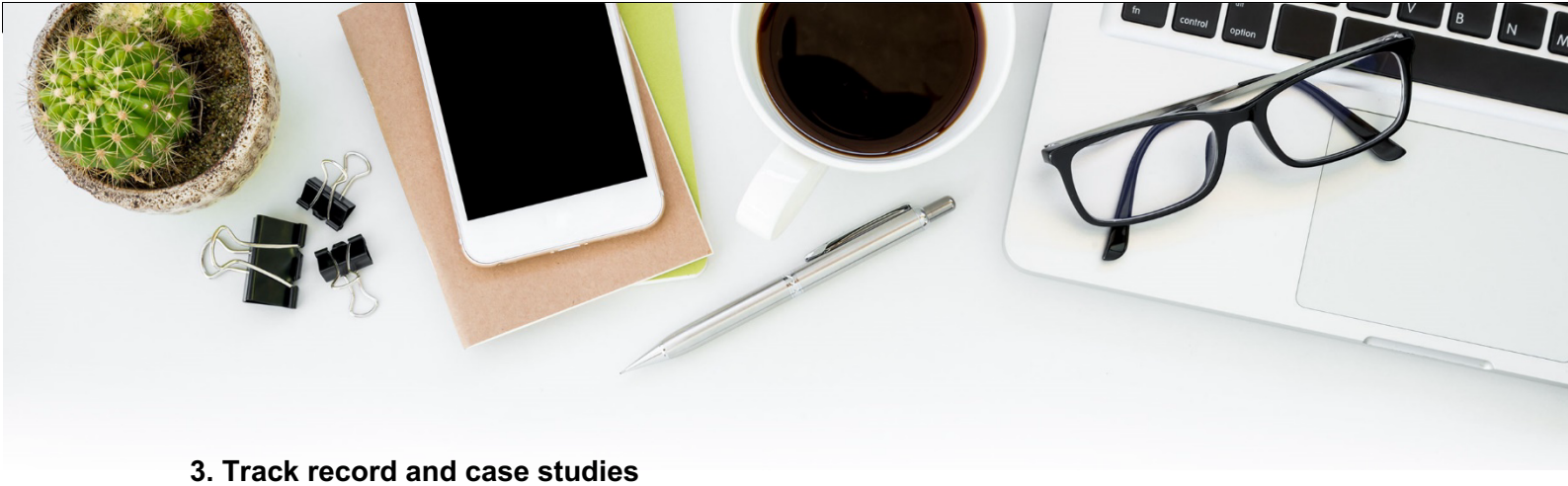
Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker begins every client engagement with a strategic discovery process designed to define reputation goals, audience priorities and measurable communications outcomes before any campaign activity begins.

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2. Industry understanding

☐ Does the agency understand our sector and its key issues?
☐ Have they worked with organisations of a similar size or stage of growth?
☐ Can they demonstrate insight into the media landscape that covers our industry?
☐ Do they bring fresh thinking or cross-sector experience that could benefit our brand?

Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker works across sectors including technology, hospitality, sustainability, consumer brands and corporate organisations, allowing the team to apply creative storytelling approaches across industries.



3. Track record and case studies

☐ Has the agency shared clear case studies with measurable results?
☐ Can they demonstrate experience launching brands, managing reputation or building thought leadership?
☐ Do their examples show strategic thinking rather than only media coverage?
☐ Have they worked with reputable brands or organisations?

Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker has won multiple global and local industry awards, including recognition as South Africa's Best Small PR Consultancy and Best Creative Agency in South Africa for two consecutive years.

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4. Media relationships

☐ Does the agency demonstrate strong relationships with relevant journalists?
☐ Do they tailor pitches rather than sending generic press releases?
☐ Can they explain how they identify the right media angle for a story?
☐ Do they understand both traditional media and digital publications?
☐ Do they have experience securing coverage beyond their home market if your brand operates internationally?

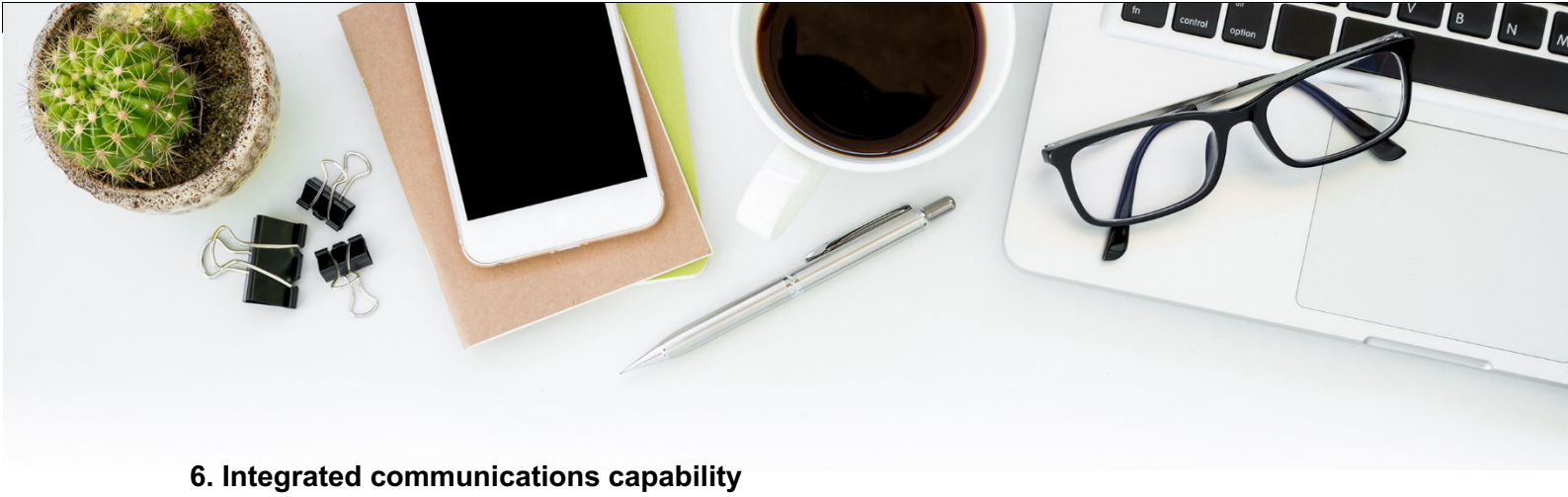
Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker has won multiple industry awards for media relations campaigns and manages press engagement across South Africa as well as internationally across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

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5. Communication model

☐ Have they explained whether the engagement should be project-based or retainer?
☐ Do they clearly define deliverables and expected outcomes rather than simply billing for hours?
☐ Will you receive clear reporting and measurable insights from campaigns?
☐ Do they demonstrate long-term client relationships that indicate consistent value delivery?

Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker operates on an output-driven model focused on measurable results rather than hourly billing. The agency has maintained client partnerships for more than seven years, reflecting a long-term strategic approach to communications.



6. Integrated communications capability

☐ Does the agency integrate PR with social media and digital storytelling?
☐ Can they support executive thought leadership and LinkedIn positioning?
☐ Do they understand how to optimise press articles and blog content with SEO keywords so stories can also be discovered through search?
☐ Do they offer influencer engagement where relevant to the campaign?
☐ Can they produce owned content such as podcasts, video interviews or blog articles to extend the life of PR stories?

Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker delivers fully integrated PESO communications strategies combining press relations, social media management, influencer engagement, search-led content and long-form storytelling. The agency also operates HLS Studios, its in-house podcast and video production facility, to help brands create owned media alongside earned coverage.

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7. Industry credibility and standards

☐ Is the agency actively involved in the professional PR industry and its governing bodies?
☐ Do they demonstrate thought leadership through industry participation or partnerships?
☐ Do they contribute to the development of future communications talent?
☐ Are they recognised by peers through industry awards or professional memberships?

Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker is actively involved in the global communications industry. The agency participates in the PRCA Africa network, is a member of PRISA, contributes to the PRCA Sustainability Committee, and represents Africa within the United Nations Development Programme climate communications task force. The agency also supports universities through mentorship programmes and student internships.

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8. The chemistry test

☐ Do you trust the people who will actually manage the account?
☐ Is communication clear, responsive and transparent from the start?
☐ Does the agency demonstrate a genuine interest in your brand and reputation?
☐ Do you feel confident collaborating with this team over the long term?

Did you know: Hook, Line & Sinker has built long-standing partnerships with several clients lasting up to nine years, reflecting a collaborative approach focused on trust, consistency and shared success.



Final evaluation

Before making a final decision, ask yourself:

☐ Does this agency understand our reputation goals?
☐ Do they demonstrate both creativity and strategic thinking?
☐ Do they bring integrated capabilities beyond traditional PR?
☐ Do we trust them to represent our brand publicly?

Do we tick all the boxes?

Then let's connect, it's what we do best. We would love to be a part of your exciting business journey!

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