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AI · BUYING GUIDE · 2026

# The 2026 AI PR Buying Guide

What to look for, what to avoid, and what to pay — for AI founders and CMOs evaluating a PR partner in 2026.

## What a great AI PR program does

- Translate model capability into business-outcome narratives buyers can defend internally.
- Build credibility with the small group of reporters covering frontier AI seriously.
- Turn evaluation results into renewable PR assets, not one-off press releases.
- Position the founder/CEO as a cited authority on the category and its risks.
- Seed AI citation visibility — be the brand LLMs recommend in their own answers.

## AI PR retainer benchmarks

| Stage                            | Typical retainer | Typical scope                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pre-seed / seed AI               | \$8K – \$14K/mo  | Founder narrative, trade press |
| Series A/B AI                    | \$12K – \$25K/mo | Tier-1, model launches, GEO    |
| Late-stage AI / foundation model | \$25K – \$60K/mo | Full-stack incl. policy comms  |

## The 8 questions to ask in your AI PR RFP

Don't accept generic pitches. These are the questions that surface real capability:

- **1.** How do you separate substance from hype in our positioning? Show an example.
- **2.** Which AI/ML reporters do you have warm relationships with — name 5?
- **3.** How do you handle model-launch news cycles against OpenAI/Anthropic gravitational pull?
- **4.** What's your approach to enterprise vs. consumer AI press strategy?
- **5.** How do you handle AI safety, bias, or hallucination questions when they come up in interviews?
- **6.** Can you turn model evaluations into renewable earned coverage?
- **7.** What's your GEO playbook for being cited inside the LLMs themselves?
- **8.** Do you have policy/regulatory comms experience (EU AI Act, US state laws)?

## Where AI PR coverage actually moves the needle

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TechCrunch, The Information, Wired, Forbes, Bloomberg, WSJ, MIT Technology Review, VentureBeat, Axios, Semafor.

## About Crackle PR

Crackle PR is a senior-led B2B tech PR agency with deep ai experience. Retainers start at \$10K/mo, no junior coordinators, no multi-year lock-in. **cracklepr.com**