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If you're writing in early Hebrew then you've got worse problems than PR.

The 10 Commandments of Token Sale PR

No journalists care about your token sale. At worst they think you are running a scammy pump-and-dump and at worst they are uncomfortable with their role in making you millions of dollars in thirty minutes. So how do you survive in an environment that is hostile to your existence? I have a few ideas.

This post is part of the [TokenReporter newsletter](#), a weekly email that explores the token economy. [You can sign up here.](#)

Commandment I — Thou shalt have a product.

The first step in approaching anyone—media, users, your uncle—with a token sale is to have actual product or, barring that, the potential for a product. I've seen too many token sales that involve two business guys, an UpWork designer, and your uncle with nary a product person in sight. Do a token sale **after** you have an MVP, not before. What was true in

seed stage investing is true now: the market rewards builders who prepare for success.

Commandment II — Thou shalt only talk about your product.

When you send an email to a journalist you will say exactly this, no more, no less:

Hey, I'm Joe. I'm the CEO of Spankums.me. We're creating an app that gets you spankings-on-demand. Can we talk?

Notice there is no mention of the ICO, no mention of how you'll spank people, nothing to distract from your crystal-clear mission: spankings-as-a-service. Don't waste any time talking about how your SpankToken will revolutionize the blockchain. Save that for the Skopje Cryptocurrency Meetup. Your first email should explain your position with absolute clarity. Nothing else works. And do not under any circumstances do this:

Hi! I'm Joe and I'm CEO for Spankums.me. I loved yours story on How One Company Made A Million Dollars Selling Bologna Sandwiches In Las Vegas. I, too, love Bologna Sandwiches In Las Vegas. It is so funny!

I've been trying to find out what founders use to create these seemingly personalized emails that basically scrape a journalist's RSS feed for past coverage but, in general, it's as transparent and silly as saying "Hey, I see you're into dumb stuff. Can you look at my dumb stuff?"

Commandment III — Thou shalt not spam.

Before you send a message, find 10 people you want to send it to. Pick lower-level reporters at the large publications, folks who aren't flying around to gala economic forums. Email those people exactly the message above and follow-up two times. And don't mess up in the process. Keep meticulous records. My absolute favorite is when a founder sends out a message to 500 non-BCCed reporters. It makes everyone feel amazing.

Instead of splashing your story into 500 inboxes, find 10 inboxes that count, then ten more. I know it's not efficient and doesn't fit into your sales funnel but who cares?

Don't bother hitting journalists on Facebook, LinkedIn, Splunk, or Twitter. You will piss them off.

Commandment IV — Nobody cares about Leonardo DiCaprio.

If you hire an influencer to market for you make sure you know what you're doing. You're not going to convince a journalist to write about you because Leonardo DiCaprio or Will.i.am or the Pope is a (paid) "advisor." You're literally throwing your money away on these people so if it's part of your strategy to build community think long and hard about why you're doing it. Think that getting one of the Kardashians to Instagram your token sale will convince journalists you're big time? Wrong. Want to pay Jake Paul to micturate on your T-shirt on a YouTube video? Go for it if you think two million pre-teen girls are your audience but that's not a sellable story.

Commandment V — Thou shalt explain yourself clearly and concisely.

This is a corollary to Commandment II. I once received a Facebook message from a founder whose entire idea read like stereo instructions. I wish I could find it to reprint it here but it sounded something like this:

Bring to the table win-win survival strategies to ensure proactive domination. At the end of the day, going forward, a new normal that has evolved from token generation X is on the runway heading towards a streamlined cryptocurrency cloud solution. User generated Ethereum-paid content in real-time will have multiple touchpoints for offshoring.

If you can't explain yourself to a non-tech-obsessed friend then you have a bigger problem on your hands. If you're having trouble streamlining, ask that friend to help or give up and focus on your nerd peer group.

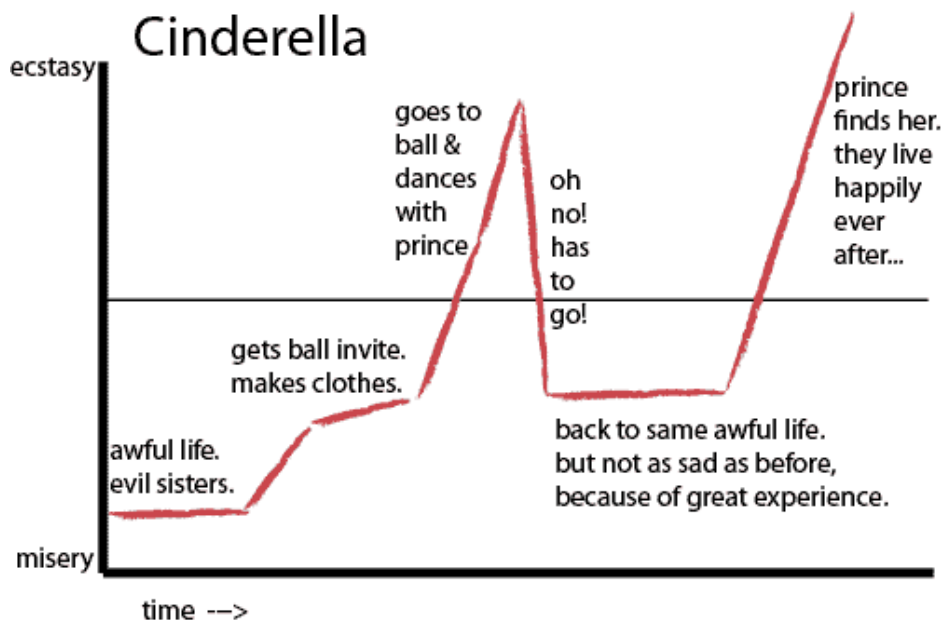
Commandment VI — Thou shalt build your own community.

A blog post on a major site doesn't get you a community. You have to build that yourself.

What a blog post or article does give you is very simple: the world now has a record of your existence written by a trusted journalist on a great publication. Don't underestimate the value of that. But press is the last step in a long community-building process.

Commandment VII — Thou shalt approach the press with milestones, not explosions.

A business story is primarily a human story. It is a tale of anxiety, woe, and blazing success. It is a tale with ups and downs, a Cinderella story repeated every few months. In fact, Cinderella is the plot to remember when pitching your story. Here it is:



You need to reach out when you're on an upward turn. Don't tell the world about your awful experiences early on but about the launch of your product. Don't tell the world about your new hire who will make sense of the spaghetti code your contractors build but about how you're making millions of dollars a day selling spankings. Don't tell the world about your funding rounds when you can tell the world about your next great product.

Commandment VIII — Thou shalt not hire a scammy PR person.

Founders should hire a PR person when they are far too busy, important, and rich to do PR themselves. A PR person has one arrow in their quiver: a list of journalists. That's it. They also have the patience of Job when it comes to reaching out to journalists. There are exactly ten PR people I trust in the entire industry. Everyone else either phones it in or treats their clients privacy like a frat covering up an hazing injury. Either way, you're wasting your money.

Most PR people cost \$5,000 to \$8,000 a month. What do they do for that money? An older partner in the firm calls you for 10 minutes then they pass your info off to a younger PR person who then does exactly what I said above—finds 10 interesting people (or 1,000) and emails them three times. Maybe one will go above and beyond and send a targeted

email to the Wall Street Journal but you're going to get 10 meetings for that \$10K. I'm not sure it's worth it.

Commandment IX — Thou shalt just shut up, maybe?

Maybe, just maybe, it's better to keep quiet? If you can't explain yourself, if you don't want to stop spamming, and you're already moderately successful and have a product, maybe your best bet is to work quietly and wait for the press to come to you when you succeed? You'd be doing everyone a favor.

Commandment X — Thou shalt remember that media craves the concrete, not the ephemeral.

It may seem that journalists print only lies and untruths, but this is false. A journalist prides herself on producing quality content for an intelligent audience that pushes the global conversation forward. While popular opinion is currently slanted away from the journalistic arts, I don't want to live in a world where they don't exist.

Therefore, offer something of value. Tell a story that has concrete ramifications on the world. If your product is spankings-on-demand then embrace that. Tell people why they need spankings. Tell them how you'll do it, tell them that spankings on demand is the next Uber. If you're not changing the world for the better you're changing it for the worse. Figure out how to tell that positive, real story and you will be successful. Fill your communications with obfuscation, frustration, and lies and you'll reap the same.

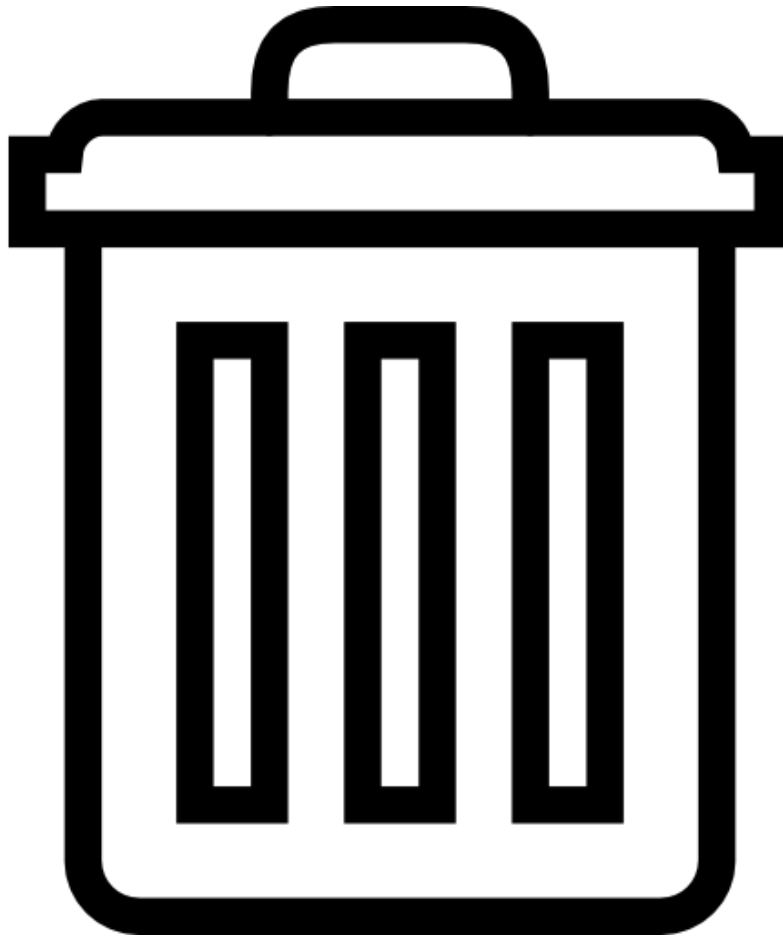
Epilogue

I just got an email with this first paragraph. The names have been changed to protect the not-very-innocent.

Please find below information about the successful partnership between Porkcoin and yet another key partner in the pork industry.

It would be great to see this information published at your media.

It breaks every single rule I've set forth: it's unclear what the product does, it wastes my time with a demand, not a question, and what follows after this paragraph is a 1,000 word email featuring some of the most depraved tech speak in existence. That they got me to open the email is a quirk of fate not the result of any intelligent strategy. Further, there is only one place any journalist will put this kind of message:



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