

Million Dollar PR Advice

21 proven strategies to get profitable,
positive publicity for your business



With the compliments of
Graham McGregor
www.TheUnfairBusinessAdvantage.com

Introduction



I read a quote on PR recently that I really liked...

"If a young man tells his date how handsome, smart and successful he is – that's advertising. If the young man tells his date she's intelligent, looks lovely, and is a great conversationalist, he's saying the right things to the right person and that's marketing. If someone else tells the young woman how handsome, smart and successful her date is – that's PR."

S. H. Simmons

I like this quote because it illustrates the importance of Public Relations (PR) and how it differs from marketing and advertising.

So how do you get positive publicity for your own business?

Which brings me to the purpose of this new guide 'Million Dollar PR Advice-Volume 1'

To create this guide, I asked 21 PR experts from around the world to each share a proven PR strategy that had worked successfully.

I asked each expert to explain the PR Strategy and share the results it got. I also asked them to give some tips on how other businesses could use the same PR strategy.

In the next few pages you'll discover 21 proven PR strategies that these PR experts so generously shared with me.

I recommend that you read through this guide a number of times and make note of the PR strategies that look particularly relevant for your own business situation.

Then put some of these strategies into action and notice what happens.

I look forward to hearing what you find most helpful.

Graham McGregor

PS: I'd like to give a huge acknowledgement and BIG THANK YOU to all the PR experts who participated in this guide. I have personally found great value from what every single person had to say. (And I trust you get some great value as well.)



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“Publicity is absolutely critical. A good PR story is infinitely more effective than a front page ad.” Richard Branson

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Go on a listening tour to grow your business

By Paige Arnof-Fenn



Remember in 2008 when the financial markets collapsed and triggered the “worst economy since the Great Depression?”

I do, I had 3 six figure engagements that were all just about to kick off and in less than 2 weeks they were all put on hold.

It was a sure sign that the world had changed and all of the sudden my dance card for the 4th quarter had a lot more white space than expected.

Like most small business owners, I like being busy so I immediately started to look at ways to begin filling my calendar again.

I could see that I had several speeches and a few board meetings in various cities around the country I had already committed to so knew I had at least a few places to go, people to see and things to do before year end.

Now that I had some extra time I thought I would spend a few additional days in each city and do what I had been watching all the politicians do leading up to the presidential election.

I'd reach out to potential and past clients, local thought leaders and key people in the community and go on a “listening tour” to see how they were surviving the downturn.

I knew that other people had extra time on their hands too and wanted to look busy despite the slowdown in the economy so I sent out several e-mails and picked up the phone to start inviting folks to breakfast, coffee, lunch, cocktails, whatever they preferred the week I would be in their city since I already had firm dates.

I told them I just wanted to chat, swap stories, catch up, no PowerPoints involved. It was a conversation not a sales call so their guard was down.

As I had hoped people were receptive and my dance card started to fill again. At each meeting I asked a bunch of open-ended questions to get the conversation started and before I knew it my pages were filled with what the new reality was like for them today.

Themes started to emerge across categories and geographies. It did not matter if I was speaking with a venture-backed startup in the Bay Area or a consumer products company in the Midwest or a nonprofit in New York City but everyone talked about moving from retainers to more project-based work to conserve cash, smaller budgets overall, trying to make sense of social media which was starting to take off, needing to show a return on investment sooner vs. later.

Before the recession more than half my clients were on retainer and most starter projects were at least 2 times the kinds of budgets they were now able to get approved so it was clear I had to get some new tools in my toolkit quickly to stay relevant.

It was a great opportunity to chat with so many people.

They appreciated the free lunch or coffee and I promised everyone I would send them a summary of what I learned on my tour.

Go on a listening tour to grow your business

By Paige Arnof-Fenn



I think everyone was relieved to know that their concerns were echoed and they were not alone. I also added a personal note to each summary to let them know that when they did have a budget again I would be offering some new smaller workshops and modules on things like how to leverage social media in their category based on the very helpful feedback they and others had shared with me on the tour.

At year end I sent out holiday cards to touch and thank each person again.

When the New Year rolled in literally just after the Inauguration my phone started ringing again and e-mails began popping up with requests to chat about new work.

I am very happy to report that I got a lot of new clients from my listening tour!

So what are some steps you can take to set up your own listening tour?

- Make a list of prospects, thought leaders and interesting people you would like to chat with
- Invite them to drinks or a meal with no strings attached
- Ask some good questions then shut up and listen to what they have to say

So the next time you hit a slump I recommend you go on your own tour.

TAKE ACTION

I have helped several of my clients do theirs too and everyone has found it to be worthwhile and productive.

You will reconnect, learn something new, and your business will benefit.

What are you waiting for?

Paige Arnof-Fenn is the founder & CEO of Mavens & Moguls (www.MavensAndMoguls.com), a global marketing consulting firm whose clients include Microsoft, Virgin, Colgate as well as venture-backed startups and nonprofit organizations. Paige is a popular writer and speaker. She is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Business School and has served on the boards of both institutions.

The easiest way to meet people is to just look like someone who is willing to listen. Robert Brault, www.robertbrault.com

What's your PR angle?

By Kirsty Bedford

Too often people have a great story to tell, but their downfall in generating coverage in the media is not knowing what 'angle' to use.

The angle is your golden ticket; it's your key to ensuring you get publicity.

So what is an angle?

Well, it's basically the hook to sell your story.

Your angle, and your story, must be just that – a story. Not advertising or anything which reads strictly about a product.

Here's a quick example of how to, and not to do it:

Let's assume you are a small business which makes and sells organic foods through retail outlets and you want coverage about your products.

How not to do it:

Smith Foods has just launched a brand new range of organic ice-cream which will be available in gourmet delis across Australia in October.

How to do it:

Young entrepreneur John Smith who just eight months ago started making organic ice-cream using local milk in his shed in a tiny town south-west of Victoria has seen such phenomenal success; he's had to purpose build equipment to keep up with demand.

The key:

- ✓ Personalise it.
- ✓ Think of the reader.
- ✓ Make it a story, not a product sell.

Instead of making your media release, or conversation with a journalist, directly about your product, service business or event, make it about the people.

Some businesses would say - but how does that then sell the products? They may not be mentioned exactly how you want them to in the initial 'angle' but the overall story will be about your product.

Good images are also absolutely vital when selling your story to journalists.

Before sending anything to a magazine or print journalist of any kind, or an online publication (or even to give a television production company an idea of what they can shoot) – ensure you invest in a professional photographer and have a series of low and high resolution images ready for media.

Your pitch will determine whether you are forwarded on to the advertising department of a publication or are asked for high res images for publication and/or an interview.



What's your PR angle?

By Kirsty Bedford

Here's an example of a successful PR campaign I arranged for a client...

Rebello Wines, a small fruit winery in the Mornington Peninsula with highly successful award winning fruit wines decided to launch a cider to market.

It was to be Australia's first 100% real fruit blended cider, but was being launched in a very tough environment competitively – which they did very well in, but needed to create brand awareness and continue to drive growth.

The PR initiative identified their differentiation factors and key messages and then developed an 'angle' to ensure the story reached the desired audience.

Sweet success in cider space for entrepreneurial fruit winery

While the wine industry continues to struggle with a national grape glut, things couldn't be better for an entrepreneurial fruit winery in Victoria, which has revolutionised cider in this country.

Rebello Wines, on the Mornington Peninsula, had already achieved national and international acclaim with its fruit wines, when it turned its hand to cider – launching Australia's first 100% pure fruit cider blend.

The company experienced such phenomenal success that a trial run of 1,000 litres just 12 months ago sold out before production even finished, and it has now had to purchase enough tanks to produce rolling 45,000 litre batches - an 880% growth to date- and demand is continuing.



The 'Cheeky Rascal Cider' product range has just added another member to its family - Summerberry – bringing to seven the varieties on offer with the entire range now available in premium liquor outlets in every State in Australia.

Experimenting with berries is something Rebello's general manager Matt Gallace has been doing since he could pick the sweet fruit from his grandparent's farm as a toddler, at Sunny Ridge Strawberry farm.

And, after many years working on the property, (and some years off it) Matt and wife Ruth (who is now CEO of the company) decided to take with them the traditional agriculture and winemaking techniques passed down from generations, and branch out on their own.

Matt says the idea was to draw on his Italian heritage – but apply a bit of “cheeky innovation”.

“It's an exciting time to be making wine in Australia, and being at the forefront of a movement embracing innovative blending, using real fruit, and we've found our customers really like the direction we're taking.”

What's your PR angle?

By Kirsty Bedford

The move to cider, Matt says, was a natural evolution.

"Our cider is essentially apple wine. We're working with 100% Victorian apples which we blend with either our real fruit strawberry or raspberry wine, so with winemaker and brewer Wayne Hewett at the helm, and knowing that the palates of consumers were becoming increasingly discerning, we decided that a quality, premium real fruit cider might just work."

And it did.

The cider already has a string of accolades, including the Food Challenge Award for Alcoholic Beverages (which recognises and rewards best practice and innovation in food and beverage nationally), Best Cider (People's Choice) at the Fed Square Microbreweries Showcase, IGA Perth Royal Show Best Commercial Cider, and medals at both the Australian Fruit Wine Show in Hobart and the Australian Fruit Wine Show in Cairns.

Ruth says the philosophy is simple.

"Our mantra is to create great products using fresh, local fruit with no nasties, and move with the consumer."

So what's next for this innovative family of strawberry revolutionists?

"We're continually evolving," says Ruth. "We want to keep providing the Australian consumer with something unique, and lead the way in quality, premium unique cider varieties in this country – we have a lot of ideas and seeing these come to fruition is extremely exciting ... so keep watching this space!"

The result was extensive media coverage across business, food and wine and drink publications both B2C and B2B. This included a story in the daily newspaper, The Australian, and all major metros, the local community newspapers multiple times and all major trade publications. Rebello also featured on Channel 9's television programme Postcards and The Living Room on TEN.

Results can be viewed here: http://rebellowines.com.au/in_the_media

Note the key points in the media release:

- ✓ They had revolutionised the cider sector, introducing Australia's first 100% real fruit blended ciders
- ✓ They could credibly gauge their success
- ✓ It is a family run business using berries from a farm which has been in the family for three generations
- ✓ They were already available to buy – there is no point talking about a product which no-one can purchase

What's your PR angle?

By Kirsty Bedford

Action steps to use this strategy:

- ✓ Determine your audience – geographic and demographic
- ✓ Determine the publications which your audience would read
- ✓ Write down your key differentiation factors –what makes you different/unique and makes you stand out from the crowd
- ✓ Review other articles in the publications you want to approach and understand their 'style'
- ✓ Determine your 'angle' or story – and if you are unable to do so, engage a PR consultant who has writing experience who can assist you, or simply call or email (preferable) the media outlet with a very brief summary. The key here is keep it short, sharp and to the point ...and make sure it's relevant.

Key points to note when engaging a PR company:

- ✓ Make sure they have worked with clients in the industry you are in ie food, beverage, tourism etc.
- ✓ Ask who will be managing the account - so you know you're not going to be passed on to a junior or outsourced
- ✓ If you need lots of written material i.e. website, sales and marketing collateral, media releases then ask about their writing experience/background
- ✓ Ask to see recent media results for a client, so you know they can deliver
- ✓ Don't be sucked into the 'spin' – it's not about what is promised, it's about what can be delivered, work on facts and actual examples.
- ✓ Make sure you're comfortable with that person and feel you can establish a level of trust and most importantly, they understand your business sector

KDJM communications is a boutique PR agency in Melbourne, owned and operated by Kirstie Bedford, who has more than 17 years' experience in media and PR.

Kirstie has worked as a print and radio journalist, and in the public and private sectors in PR management roles.

KDJM can assist your business, product or service in a variety of ways including: full creative marketing/communication plans for your business, individual plans for a project or event, writing and editing services and media training and advice.

Contact Kirstie at www.kdjmmcommunications.com.au

The Power of Storytelling

By Angela Betancourt

Every person, every brand, and every company has a story.

Your personal story is what makes you who you are and what differentiates you from everyone else.

The same is true for your business, brand or service.

One of the most effective PR strategies is the act of discovering this story and using it to create your message and share it with your target audience.

Since the start of human civilization, storytelling has been a vehicle by which we can share information and connect with others.

In 2012, I worked with a very talented chef at a restaurant who had just acquired the title of Executive Chef.

Since this was a new chapter in his life, he wanted to establish an identity for himself that would separate him from his competition. In our first couple of meetings I asked him a lot of questions about his life and career. What I learned was that he had a very colorful background. Prior to attending culinary school, he was a classical dancer, a comedian, and a Marine. These different past lives were a part of who he had become; they were all a part of the story that led him to become a chef.

His unique story and passion for cooking were the two things I focused on the most when executing his PR campaign.

He spoke openly and engagingly about his career during interviews and he ultimately made it on the cover of the lifestyle section of a major Miami publication. Within the four month campaign, I was able to secure coverage on two local news stations, dozens of other local and national publications. People were interested in knowing more about his reinventions.

The campaign result: half a million dollars' worth of press coverage, increased social media presence, and a coveted spot in the Grand Tasting Village at the Food Network's South Beach Food and Wine Festival.

His unique perspective on the culinary world is influenced by his story. This is what made him different than other chefs. Telling his story about his career transformation and his love of food was one of the main factors behind the media relations success.

Over the years I've spoken to many people who underestimated the power of their own story. I spoke to people who believed that they didn't have a story at all; that somehow their business idea just presented itself one day or that they fell into a particular industry by accident. But after speaking with them for a while and asking them a few questions, I discover that they indeed had an impressive and impactful story.

Telling your story is about sharing your experience and thus making it easier for others to connect with you. It's about being genuine and requires some vulnerability and openness. It's about "keeping things real" and human.



The Power of Storytelling

By Angela Betancourt

A company that wants its customers to know that it cares about them shouldn't do so with just facts and statistics alone.

That company should share a story of how it recently helped a customer, how it made a difference in a community, or how it went out of its way to accommodate someone.

That kind of story will communicate caring more than a percentage or figure.

So what is your story?

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to get started:



- What is quirky about me that I don't always share with others?
- What was the hardest thing about starting this business? (Challenges are great teachers)
- What events in my life lead me to this business?
- What are unique things about the people that work here?
- What is one thing people might not know about us?

Discovering your story and sharing it with your target audience is a powerful strategy.

Don't underestimate yourself, your business, or your brand. If after brainstorming you still think you don't have a story, think about what you want to communicate to the world. From that moment on, craft your story and message.

About Angela Betancourt:

For nearly a decade Angela has designed customized PR campaigns for major hospitality brands and Inc.500 companies. She has positioned her clients as experts and leaders in their fields; helping them stay relevant in an ever changing environment. She has secured press in national publications such as Entrepreneur Magazine, New York Post, Inc., Forbes, Restaurants & Institutions, Hotels Magazine, National Geographic Traveler, Good Morning America, The Katie Couric Show, and hundreds of other regional and top trade publications. In 2012 she founded AB Public Relations (ABPR), a firm that specializes in offering their clients an integrated marketing communications approach in order to help them reach their goals. ABPR specializes in helping companies discover and tell their stories to their audience and to the world. www.abpr.biz

Get interviewed Get Famous

By Lori Nash Byron



Looking for a way to blast your business out of obscurity?

Take a page from Hollywood and do what the stars do to generate buzz for their new movie or television show.

Go on a media tour.

You've noticed the phenomenon; Russell Crowe spends his time hiding out Down Under, growling at paparazzi.

Until he has a major movie to promote.

Suddenly, he's dancing with Ellen, quipping with Conan and mugging for Guliana on ET.

Why not come out of hiding and score a bit of buzz for your own business?

Get interviewed.

Being interviewed is a super fame booster. To start, being interviewed flexes the authority principle of *influence*.

As an interview subject, you gain instant credibility. People want to listen to your advice because another professional (the interviewer) thought that you and your business were worthy of featuring.

It uses leverage – reaching more people than a one-to-one communication. You share your ideas, approach and advice with a wider audience than you could amass on your own.

Wondering how to score these fame boosting opportunities? It's easier than you might think!

With so many bloggers, radio shows (especially internet radio) and podcasts, there's a constant need to feed the voracious content machine with smart, relevant information that helps that media outlet's audience.

But to make your virtual media tour work, you've got to treat it like a project.

You could wait until opportunities "present themselves" but you won't get as many, which means that you won't create the same traction.

You'll miss out on that "everywhere effect" that grabs your ideal client's attention and propels him to contact you before you're out of his reach.

The best part is that creating a process and systems around getting interviews actually ups the ease factor. You'll get more interviews with less effort, which will actually help to get you even more interviews!

Get interviewed Get Famous

By Lori Nash Byron

Here are a few tips to get your media tour bus rolling:

Track it. Create a spreadsheet to organize your information. Include the name of the media outlet, the type – blog, radio show, podcast – hosts/ interviewers, topics covered, length, links to request interviews, etc.

Package it. Cut down on the busy work for yourself. Create a handy page with all the building blocks you'll need to pitch yourself as a guest. Include your name, business name, contact information, expertise, bio, interview topics and 6-10 sample interview questions.

This sheet will save time and effort when you or your assistant are submitting interview requests.



When it comes to uncovering interview opportunities, creativity will increase your pool:

Take a ride. Stalk your competitors and colleagues. I'm only partially joking. Make a list of 7-10 people who either do what you do or do something different, but serve the same target market.

Example: Your target market is small business owners, 10 to 100 employees in the professional services industry. Colleagues who target the same market would include: HR consultants, engagement/productivity specialists, marketers, strategic planning pros, sales trainers, accountants, attorneys, group insurance representatives, etc.

Pick people whose businesses seem to be doing well.

Visit their websites to see if they mention where they've been interviewed. Look for those "As seen in" logos or "Where's Lisa" bragging sections. Set up a Google Alert for those fellow business stars and get notified when a new interview has been published. Then, you can contact the organization, too.

Have 'em delivered. Sign up for and scour reporter query services like HARO (Help a Report Out), PitchRate, Source Bottle, ProfNet and more. Bloggers and radio hosts use these to solicit guests and topical experts.

Trade interviews. Belong to any business groups? Or even if you just know a few other small business owners, you can trade interviews – you each interview the other. It offers the same benefits above; brings new information and expertise to your audience, while getting you more exposure to a new set of fans. Everybody wins!

Get interviewed Get Famous

By Lori Nash Byron

After you've landed that interview opportunity

Before the elation wears off, panic may set in:

"What will I say?" "What if I goof it up?"

Keep cool, my soon-to-be-famous in your field friend. With a few pointers and a bit of prep, you'll make a fan of the interviewer and have a spectacular clip to share with all your clients and prospects. Follow this formula to success:

1. Preparation is paramount

You'll up your chances of delivering a killer performance if you prepare.

You can expect to spend several hours preparing for your few minutes in front of the microphone or camera. (Don't worry, once you've got a few interviews under your belt, it gets easier and takes less prep time.)

2. Know the format

First, it helps to understand the framework of the program. Do your research! Go to the show's website and listen or watch a few interviews. See how they're structured, listen to the "experts" who are featured. How do they communicate? What kind of language do they use?

3. Know your goal

Before your big moment in the spotlight, think about your goal for this interview and how you can make your goal fit into the objective of the program, which is to educate, engage or entertain its viewers.

Next, get clear on the one to three big ideas that you want to convey. What is essential that the audience understand about your topic?

Invest time and energy in planning what you want to say and most importantly how you'll say it. Frame your remarks like headlines. Give the conclusion first, briefly and directly, and back it with facts or "proof point."

Bonus points if you can give advice that's surprising or counter intuitive. It holds the audience's attention and makes them want to know more.

4. Finish strong

Make sure your comments end with your vocal tone in a down stroke. Think of it as making a statement, not asking a question.

Being interviewed is powerful public relations tool. Whether it's on a tiny blog, a radio show or live television, you're positioned as an expert on your topic. Best of all, these interviews continue to attract fans, even after they're no longer live.



Get interviewed Get Famous

By Lori Nash Byron

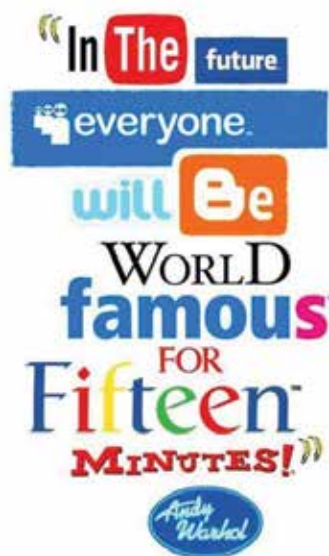
Each time I've been interviewed, it's increased the number of people that sign up for my email tips list, grown my Twitter following and brought in leads. I've even talked to prospective clients who've found me through interviews recorded several years ago!

Here's your fame boosting assignment

Start your interview tracking spreadsheet today. Schedule a time slot on your calendar each week to research new interview opportunities, send out interview requests and follow up on those you've already sent. (Again, this is a perfect task for your assistant to tackle.)

Ready, set? Grab your shades and get ready for the spotlight, superstar!

Lori Nash Byron is the founder of Famous in Your Field, a training and consulting company, working with business owners and professionals to build a powerful personal brand and grow their business through speaking, publishing and publicity. Visit FamousinYourField.com and enter your email address to get free weekly training and tips to boost your fame factor, delivered straight to your inbox.



Being famous is just a job

Britney Spears

Stay informed!

By Leslie K. Friedman

As a news junkie, I stay informed by reading the newspaper, watching the news and perusing websites.

Not only to keep up at the water cooler, but to successfully place my clients in the spotlight.

Throughout my public relations career and for all types of clients, I have used the strategy of linking what's happening in the world – locally, nationally or internationally – to my clients when pitching story ideas to the media.

As public relations director of The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa in Houston, I can pitch stories on travel, hospitality, fine dining, meetings and business, health and wellness, and body treatments at Trellis Spa.

Certainly with all the news, I can find a link somewhere. Or create one.

Prior to the Summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008, I knew of a 64-year-old female member of The Houstonian Club who, having never played basketball before joining, started playing basketball and eventually became a medallist and Senior Olympian in the sport.

Had it not been for what she called the “beautiful basketball court at The Houstonian,” she would not have mastered such skills as dribbling with both hands at the same time, or making outside shots. She began dribbling to church, the post office and bank and everywhere else she could. She joined a basketball exercise class at The Houstonian, where she learned agility, balance, quickness and hand-eye coordination. She's played with former NBA player and Hall of Famer Clyde Drexler, finished five marathons and won multiple gold and silver medals at the Senior Olympics.

More than the fact that someone her age had an interest in basketball, I saw this as an inspiring story for those thinking life ends at 40 (or any age).

I pitched her to a features writer at the Houston Chronicle, which sent a reporter and a photographer to meet her. The eventual article was a long, front-page feature in two of the paper's Neighbourhood sections.

I also pitched her to the sports director of the local affiliate covering the Olympics, knowing the station would be interested in many angles, not just the Game's winners. The station also sent out a reporter and photographer, securing a story on the local news. Much later on, I pitched her to other local television stations, and as a result, she was featured during the news on the local ABC and Fox affiliates, and appeared on the local CBS affiliate's live morning program on a segment called “Super Seniors.”

Another opportunity arose with the annual Livestock Show & Rodeo, the city's best-attended event.

To capitalize on its popularity, I created a hotel package called “Rodeo Roundup,” which included overnight accommodations in our Presidential Suite; dinner for two at our premier restaurant; chauffeured transportation to and from the evening performance; a 50-minute couples massage at Trellis; his & hers boots from a western store; and prime seats to the rodeo of their choice. The marketing director calculated the cost of the package at \$5995, inclusive of tax and gratuity.



BE SMART, BE
INTELLIGENT AND
BE INFORMED.

Stay informed!

By Leslie K. Friedman

I pitched a story with the angle that with so many typical stories about the rodeo – the parade, the BBQ cooking contest, the carnival, rodeo attire, etc., why not do something unique in their arsenal of stories? The NBC affiliate was sold!

While no one booked the package – and we didn't expect they would – a three-minute story gave us the opportunity to showcase our hotel, the Presidential Suite and Trellis. And it didn't cost us a dime.

The energy industry is a sector with many story possibilities: concerns about global warming, reducing our dependence on oil, reliance on foreign oil and rising energy prices.

Many years ago while working at a public relations firm, I had an attorney as a client who was very knowledgeable on ethanol.

I pitched him as an expert on it and alternative fuel products to several media outlets, and secured him in an article on the front page of the Houston Chronicle, in stories in two Oil & Gas trades, on the news of a local television news station and in two news radio station interviews.



All types of businesses can – and should – use this strategy, no matter the work they do.

From the housing market and the economic outlook, to new products on the market promising to save energy.

From new banking regulations and policies, to what will be hot this holiday season.

From what policies our government leaders are establishing, to what celebrities are buying or where they are traveling.

These situations represent just a few examples of situations that can be deemed newsworthy, and where you can link your client.

Once you have identified a story you would like to pitch and have determined who/what experts or ties to the topic you want to use, develop a list of questions to interview your subject(s).

Encourage them to provide information not have touched upon. Then determine the appropriate media for that topic.

For instance, if there is a new law for filing taxes, and one of your clients is well-read on the laws and can explain how they will affect that medium's audience, perhaps pitch a Q&A in the business section of the newspaper, or in the local business journal.

If there is a new home product on the market, perhaps your client can talk to about it with a television news reporter or on a talk show, explaining and demonstrating the product.

Keep in mind that reporters have beats, or specialized reporting.

At most major media outlets, you will notice that some cover energy, others real estate.

Some cover health and science, others local news. Some cover football, others baseball.

Stay informed!

By Leslie K. Friedman

This allows them to know a particular industry very well. At smaller publications, like weekly community newspapers, reporters tend to cover a variety of topics, due to smaller staffs. And, in regards to weekly community newspapers, don't forget to pitch them story ideas. People do read them!

When determining who to contact, it is best to create a list of reporters that cover your industry, and report to specific audiences you want to target.

You can call each of the publications and ask the name and email address of the reporter to send story ideas about your product and/or service. Hopefully, by reading the newspaper and other publications, you will have determined who covers those beats. Oftentimes their email address is included at the bottom of their story.

In reaching out to media, it is best to send your pitch by email, and to keep it brief. Reporters are very busy, and receive numerous emails. Also, get to your point early on. You can't expect them to read several paragraphs before determining what you are pitching. Have a catchy title in the Subject line. You want to grab their attention.

It is not a good idea to call the reporter to make sure he/she received your email. Nothing annoys them more! And, just because they don't respond does not mean they are not interested. Simply wait a few days to follow up by phone to more thoroughly discuss your idea and answer questions. Always ask if this is a good time to talk. If they're not interested, try someone else, somewhere else.

The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa, located on 18 acres of wooded landscape in the heart of Houston, features a 289-room four-star hotel, a 175,000-square-foot private health club – with three pools, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, 200 group exercise classes a week, a full-size basketball court, a Sports Shop and more – and a 17,000-square-foot spa. It also offers 32,000 square feet of meeting space. A campus with all of these amenities and services and a staff of diverse backgrounds and expertise enables me the opportunity to pitch countless story ideas to numerous reporters. For more information, visit www.houstonian.com.

**Leslie K. Friedman
Director of Public Relations
The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa
lfriedman@houstonian.com
713-685-7961**

I am reluctant to judge things without being informed.

Giorgio Moroder

Increasing your visibility, authority, and sales using press release marketing

By Tara Geissinger and Christine O'Kelly



As owners of a press release distribution firm, we've always been big fans of integrating online publicity into traditional PR campaigns.

And why wouldn't we be?

Publishing a press release online not only puts your news in front of journalists, bloggers and potential customers, but also helps boost your visibility in search engines and social media, and position your brand as an industry mover and shaker.

We recommend online press releases in all of our marketing campaigns because when done correctly, it has proven to be an extremely effective way to generate visibility, buzz, and brand authority online.

How This Press Release Generated an Estimated \$14,500

Jeremy Enke of CarbonPoker was looking to capitalize on current events to get more visibility for his affiliate poker company. April 15, 2011 was dubbed "Black Friday" in the online gaming community because this was the day the largest online poker sites were shut down. A few days prior, Enke published a \$79 press release on Online PR Media commenting on whether online poker was legal in the U.S.

"This was easily the most successful campaign I have ever done. Because of the keywords and syndication, this press release still sends traffic to CarbonPoker each and every day. This press release was in Google news and ranking on page one during the last week of April and the beginning of May 2011," said Enke.

He estimates that since publishing, this single press release has directly resulted in 421 new clients and over \$14,500 in affiliates commissions. Not bad ROI on a \$79 investment!

6,488,564 page views from a single press release

One press release on our site continues to rank as one of the top viewed press releases weekly since its publication a year and a half ago in December of 2011.

Not only are people finding the news through online searches, the average time visitors stay on the page is 5 minutes and 28 seconds -- compared with an average site-wide time on page of 1 minute and 50 seconds.

Since links clicked on OnlinePRNews.com's pages open in a new window, this metric indicates that people are clicking through and taking action.

Of course not every press release is going to generate these types of results. But we've done the analysis and have identified key attributes that are present in successful press release marketing campaigns.

*"The only thing worse than being talked about
is not being talked about."*

Oscar Wilde

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Getting peak performance from your press releases

The key to generating these types of results is twofold:

1. Optimize for Visibility -- Your press releases must be discoverable by the people you want to get your news in front of. People find and discover information in a variety of ways online and you must optimize your release for this.
2. Optimize for Conversion -- The boring press release of old is no more. Today's press releases are colorful, interactive, and serve as a landing page that can convert a reader to a customer or subscriber. You can dramatically increase your conversion rate by taking advantage of the opportunities that an online multimedia press release offers.

Visibility optimization checklist

1) Press Release Title

Think about what types of terms your target audience might be searching for at the moment you want your news to land in front of them. Work in the top pick keyword in the title of your press release.



Why? The title of your published press release often becomes the title tag for the page and the URL, which is a major factor in where a page will rank in searches for that term.

Also, people tend to share the title of an article or press release when using social media sites like Twitter and Facebook.

If your keyword phrase isn't in that title, your news isn't going to appear when people are searching those channels.

Having a compelling title should always take first priority, so don't squeeze in an awkward phrase just for the sake of rankings...but if you can make it work seamlessly it's definitely worth it!

2) Press Release Summary

Incorporate some of the other keyword phrases you chose into the press release summary. The summary of an online press release often becomes the Meta description, which is another important area for search engine optimization.

3) Images

Many people use Google image search -- particularly when searching for products or anything visual.

Name your image something that describes the photo (such as "red-cedar-toybox.jpg").

If the press release distribution site you're using offers an opportunity for you to add alt text, enter a keyword phrase that describes the photo (such as "red cedar toybox with gold etching").

Do not make the alt text too long or over stuff it with keywords. This type of keyword stuffing can work against you.

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Conversion Optimization Checklist

1) Press Release Title

You need your keyword in the title to increase the odds that your target audience can find it. But if they find it and aren't compelled to click through, does it matter? A press release title should clearly state "what's in it for them" (i.e. the reader).

We call this "giving them the juice, not the orange." Don't toss your target audience an orange and ask them to peel away the flesh and peel back the layers and extract the juice (what they really want).

For example, just saying **"ABC Realty Announces Short Sale Buying Webinar,"** is handing them the orange and asking them to extract the juice.

Taking it a step further and saying: **"Short Sale Buying Expert Reveals How To Practically Steal Low Priced Property in Free Webinar,"** tells them exactly what they are going to get and positions the right audience for a conversion.

Look for a hook. What's the part of the story that's going to get people talking and sharing online? Can you tie into current events? Taking a few moments to consider your audience and your goals can make all the difference in how your news is received and shared.

2) Press Release Summary

The press release summary often becomes the short snippet of text that you see below the blue link (the title) on the search engine results page.

If the title grabs them, the summary can push them a step further to click through. Use the summary to further elaborate on the hook in the title and encourage a click.

3) Images and Video

Human beings are naturally drawn to visual images. Online press releases that include images or video are more apt to be noticed.

By including these types of multimedia elements, you're not only keeping them on the page longer and drawing them into your message, but also connecting with your audience and starting to build a relationship.



4) Call to Action

Before you publish your press release, or any piece of content, consider what ACTION you want the reader to take. Your conversion metric is not always going to be "a sale," but you do want to get them into your sales funnel.

This may mean getting them on your mailing list by offering a free download, or signing up for a webinar, or making a sale.

Whatever your conversion metric is, be sure to clearly state it and link to it in the press release. I suggest placing this call to action on a single line between paragraph breaks.



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For example:

Sign up for the free webinar "How To Practically Steal Low Priced Property" here:

<http://www.examplesite.com/webinar-signup>

You would be surprised how often people do not tell the audience what to do next. And even if they do, do not provide a link where they can take action.

5) iFrame

Some press release sites will offer an iFrame below the body of the press release.

An iFrame is essentially a "window" that allows the reader to navigate your website without ever even leaving the press release page.

Instead of displaying your homepage in the iFrame as the vast majority of people automatically do, display the page where the reader can take action -- such as:

- An ebook download page
- A webinar registration page
- An ecommerce product page

A healthy blend of visibility optimization and conversion optimization is the winning recipe for successful press release marketing. Try incorporating these strategies into your next press release marketing campaign and you might be quite surprised by the difference!

Free Downloadable Resources

eBook: "The Results Driven Press Release"

<http://www.onlineprnews.com/how-to-write-a-press-release>

General Press Release Template:

<http://onlineprnews.com/blog/2013/08/the-post-penguin-2-0-press-release-template/>

The Online PR Media Blog

<http://onlineprnews.com/blog>

About the Authors:

Tara Geissinger and Christine O'Kelly are Co-Owners of Online PR Media (<http://www.onlineprmedia.com>), a press release distribution and online publicity service. Their passion is helping businesses get more from their PR and online marketing campaigns through tools that bring live to smart and creative ideas.

Pitching a Bundle of Products

By Sandra Garcia



A great strategy for trade show style events and retail businesses is pitching media with a range of new and innovative products.

In the case of events, you need more than just the What, Where, and When to garner media attention.

Pitching a bundle of products that are new or have cool features make a great segment for TV, which relies on visuals.

You would need a great spokesperson who is familiar with each product, and who would be able to speak about the items quickly, but effectively.

Bloggers and print writers also like to do stories on the “Top Five Things” or “Top Ten Things” to see or buy at events, so you can pitch these top items well in advance.

For example, I work with Western Canada’s largest consumer holiday show, the West Coast Christmas Show, each winter.

They sell over 100 products and services at the show. A few years ago, a TV network asked me to pick the top 10 products to feature in a five-minute segment with the morning and noon show hosts.

After pitching about 15 products that vendors were willing to feature, the TV producer chose 10 and the show organizer had to become familiar with each one.

Five minutes goes by very fast, but he is able to talk about each product for at least 20 seconds, live on-air.

This results in exposure for the businesses that are selling the products, and motivates viewers to buy tickets so that they can purchase those holiday gifts at the show.

For the same show, I also worked with an online magazine writer who was unable to attend, but who was doing a holiday story on sweet treats. Because we had a few chocolate vendors at the show, I arranged for them to send her samples. She was able to promote the show in advance so that readers would know to buy the products there, or at other stores where they are sold.

In the case of a retail store, it is the same process.

It is impossible to pitch media your entire store inventory, so you must choose your top 5-10 products that have a theme or common element (new items are always great), or that may relate to a trend or topic already being talked about in the news.

Holidays are a great time to pitch multiple products from the same store. Always ensure there is a great spokesperson for broadcast shows, as the interviews are often done live.

High resolution, quality photos are absolutely key for print media, and online as well.

*“There is no such thing as bad publicity
except your own obituary”*

Brandan Beehan

Pitching a Bundle of Products

By Sandra Garcia

Local vintage boutique F AS IN FRANK has a unique brand presence in that its items appeal to a younger demographic.

Known for their snapback hats, bleached denim vests, and camouflage pants, it is quite easy for media to select one or a few products from their current stock to feature in a story, though the items tend to lean towards a Spring/Summer season.

In addition to participating in Vancouver's Eco Fashion Week, F AS IN FRANK's active social media team frequently snaps photos of their style-savvy customers, which have appeared in publications as far as Japan.

Recently, the editorial team at the *Treasures & Travels lifestyle blog* – a female trio in Vancouver – was invited to visit the store and pick out pieces to form outfits that they then modelled in photos and posted online.

A bundling strategy could even work for service-based businesses.

You could prepare some great B-roll footage of your services in action, or at the very least, high-resolution photos or a video describing each service.

In the latter case, the information would rely heavily on the business's spokespeople, rather than visuals of products. Ensure that you use a professional photographer and/or videographer.

In thinking about this strategy, ask yourself – what is a group of products or services that would make for a great media story or segment, or would appeal to a reporter or show that is normally outside of our industry?

How will we present the idea using an online newsroom, photos, and/or video? The possibilities are endless.



Sandra Garcia has executed Publicity campaigns for some of Vancouver's biggest events, including the EAT! Vancouver Food + Cooking Festival.

In 2012, she launched Conscious Public Relations Inc., a brand that reflects her personal values. Conscious PR's mission is to change what we see in the media and online by communicating client stories clearly and consciously. www.ConsciousPR.com



How partnering with others brought me a million hits on google

By Shel Horowitz



When my eighth book, *Guerrilla Marketing Goes Green: Winning Strategies to Improve your Profits and Your Planet* (co-authored with Jay Conrad Levinson), was released, it was the first time in 18 years I had worked with a major publisher.

Knowing I had to show them I'm a marketable author, and knowing they would want to see considerably more reach than I have on my own, I chose a partnership strategy

One of the most powerful marketing strategies I advocate in the book is to form alliances with others who are already reaching your key market.

And taking my own advice, I put together several alliances in the project.

First of all, I brought my co-author in: Jay Conrad Levinson, "the father of Guerrilla marketing," is a marketing superstar with not only an extremely well-known brand but also a large and well-oiled marketing machine.

From reading some of his other books, I had a feeling this concept of Green marketing would resonate with him, and I was right. He was delighted to be part of this project.

Jay's involvement made it a much bigger book from the publisher's point of view, and thus gave us considerably more leverage in negotiating a contract; the publisher saw this as an important book.

Next, I sought a charity partner for the launch. I brought in Green America, which is perfectly aligned with the philosophy of the book.

It's an organization that supports Green, local businesses.

And finally, I went out to my considerable network of bloggers, e-zine publishers, and such, and offered them the opportunity to benefit from promoting the launch: first, by submitting a bonus and getting exposure to everyone who registers as a buyer—resulting in a package of over \$2000 worth of extra goodies that anyone who buys the book (no matter where they buy it) can get with a couple of clicks.

And second, by launching a membership program in conjunction with the launch, and offering commissions on any sales of that program.

So they had two incentives to participate, and these make it sweeter for buyers of the book as well as for the marketing partners.

The publisher, John Wiley & Sons, did partnership outreach of their own.

They worked out a deal with Amazon to do a promotion around Earth Day, with a very generously discounted price

What were the results of these partnerships?

The membership program failed, but the partnership strategy succeeded.

On my own, at that time, I had access to about 10,000 people (depending on how much overlap there is between my newsletter subscribers and my book buyers).

Bringing Jay in added 84,000 people.

Adding Green America added 94,000.

And adding the bloggers/publishers reached another 800,000.

How partnering with others brought me a million hits on google

By Shel Horowitz

So I went from the 10,000 people I could reach on my own to 988,000.

In other words, I could reach almost a million people through partnerships.

And those partners and their networks did spread the word.

Because of their efforts combined with my own and the publisher's, exactly one month after the publication date, hits on Google for "Guerrilla Marketing Goes Green" (exact match) were an extraordinary 1,140,000.

I don't think I've ever been involved with anything that got a million hits on Google before.

What did these partner campaigns cost me?

Almost nothing.

The only things I had to pay out were to cover a few hours of my assistant's time to set up the infrastructure (less than \$200), and the results-based payment to the charity partner.

All the rest was just time and creativity.

How Can You Put Your Own Partner Strategies Into Place?

If this article has inspired you to explore partnership marketing—and I hope it has—here are three easy steps to get started:

- 1: Identify the best potential partners: figure out who is already reaching the exact people who will be your best customers or clients.—what companies or which experts are already trusted and respected by your future customers.
- 2: Design an offer that clearly demonstrates how working with you will be in their best interest and accomplish their goals faster and more efficiently than not working with you (for my book launch, I designed tools to grow their newsletter lists, their share of mind, and their revenues).
- 3: Write and send those letters, track the responses (both positive and negative), and work the program!
- 4: Bonus step: thank and reward those who have helped you.

Which would you rather read? "Electronic Privacy Expert Releases New Book" or "It's 10 O'Clock—Do You Know Where Your Credit History Is?" People will THANK you for letting them read press releases, book jackets, sellsheets, web pages by Shel Horowitz (author, Grassroots Marketing for Authors and Publishers, Guerrilla Marketing Goes Green, six other books; internationally syndicated columnist) Bye-bye boring copy!

<http://www.FrugalMarketing.com/publishers.shtml>

Shel also speaks on book publishing/marketing, green business/green marketing, ethical business success.

Buy Grassroots Marketing for Authors and Publishers direct, get Shel's e-book, "The Missing Chapters" (other bonuses, too). <http://grassrootsmarketingforauthors.com>

Buy Guerrilla Marketing Goes Green—get \$2000 in bonuses.

<http://www.guerrillamarketinggoesgreen.com/resources-2/bonuses>

“To wine or not to dine, that is the question”

By Joe Hughes

Shakespeare might be shaking in his grave with me as I ruin one of his most famous quotes, “To be or not to be, that is the question”.

But in Public Relations world, to wine or not to dine, is the most important question in my opinion.

The 1980’s were famous for long lunches at swanky restaurants, games of golf at Royal Sydney and sipping on chilled champagne while on a beautiful boat on Sydney Harbour- all in the hope of getting new business.

Wining and dining business executives is hardly a new vehicle to impress prospective clients, but with the Global Financial Crisis, this way of work, came to a grinding halt.

Since I started my own company in 2009, I haven’t reinvented the wheel; I’ve simply turned back the clock and started taking journalists out for a quick drink or bite to eat.

A diet coke is often just as good as Moet and I’ve done many deals over a steaming coffee on a cold day and maybe a little Lindt chocolate.

I believe it is the single most successful strategy I have employed in my Public Relations business.

Strangely though, I don’t use it with clients, just with journalists.

While content is the key when pitching any story to a journalist or producer, the stronger your relationship with them, the more they are likely to work with you, to include your client’s product or service in a story they may be doing.

People in the media get inundated with media releases every day from global Public Relations firms to boutique ones. They often just look at the headline and this alone may allow them to choose your story; or not.



I prefer to pick up the phone, in an old fashioned way and pitch the story in first. As I have often spent anyway from 30 minutes to literally hours with the journalist in question, we are able to have a conversation first about either their family, their favourite sports team or how their house renovation is coming along.

By adding a human element to the pitch, I am differentiating myself from every other publicist and the journalist in question is more likely to help me with my story and get it across the line.

This in turn helps the client get the coverage they are after, which leads to an increase in revenue for them, which means they can afford to continue paying me.

I try and see a journalist once a week. I try and see new ones, but it is just as important to continue to build relationships with existing journalists.

As I mentioned earlier, it really doesn’t matter if it is a soy latte, sushi train or a fine dining experience, a beer at a local pub or cocktails at the newest bar in town.

Putting a face to a name is far more valuable than just seeing someone’s name in an inbox or via a text.

Over a 12 month period I spent literally \$1000’s of dollars taking out one producer from a television network. As time went by they would even shout me lunch, as the relationship became mutually beneficial. I would always give this network my stories first, so I became somewhat of an asset to them. Over the ensuing two years I placed between 20-30 stories on a high rating television show, simply through having a strong relationship with a producer. We were able to work together to achieve common goals.

“To wine or not to dine, that is the question”

By Joe Hughes

When you see your client on television, in my opinion, this is the end goal of working in Public Relations.

Seeing the joy on your clients face is something you will never forget either.

My ‘wining and dining’ strategy isn’t revolutionary. I didn’t invent it, but I have made it the most important part of my business.

It doesn’t matter what industry I have a client in, I can now call up a journalist in sport, fashion, technology, finance, food, beauty, automotive, FMCG or music and pitch in a story easily- as I know the journalist.

Any Public Relations firm can easily copy it. They simply need to identify key journalists for their clients and ask them out to meet them in person. Start with a simple coffee, close to their office. From here, they can begin to develop their own relationship with the journalist. Making the meeting close to the journalist’s office gives them less excuses not to come.

It’s important to not always be pitching a story too. Simply have a conversation and get to know the person, that way they won’t always think you want something when you speak to them.

Treat a journalist with respect and they will in turn do the same to you.

Even if you don’t work in the Communications industry, this ‘old’ format can still be utilized and copied.

With existing clients or stakeholders, make sure your contact with them isn’t just about work. If your client loves AFL, take them to a game of AFL and get to learn about them outside the work environment.

Buy some Gold Glass movie vouchers and give it to them as a random gift, to take their partner or a friend.

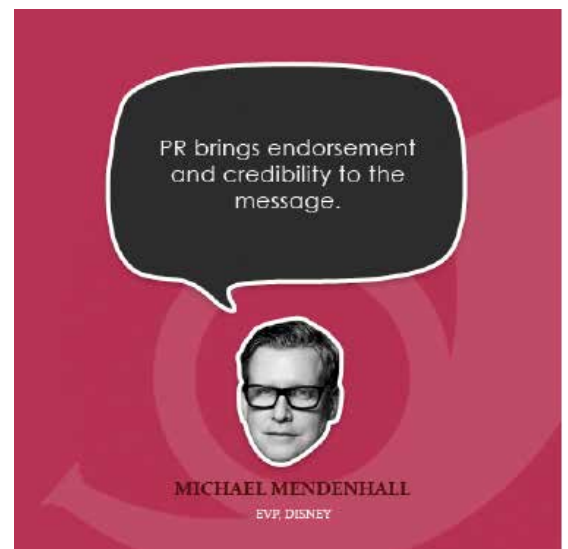
Remembering someone’s birthday is such a small thing, but can really mean a lot to the development of a business relationship. It simply shows that you actually do care about them, outside of the office.

A simple email, text or phone call is all that is needed on this day and I know how much clients appreciate it.

If you are a sales representative, organize coffee meetings with the store and don’t talk about work. If they are too busy to leave the store, bring them their favourite coffee and a muffin or a fresh sandwich and orange juice.

The small touches are what ultimately make the big differences.

I call myself a ‘Mediaologist’, again different from an Account Director or Public Relations Manager (differentiation is always the key). I operate N O W! Communications, a boutique Public Relations firm in Sydney. I have clients that range from former Australian Rugby League coaches, to weight loss pills, to magicians to technology giants. With over 8000 journalists phone numbers, Australia wide, I will try and get any company coverage, NOW! (www.nowcommunications.net).



The fact of the matter

By Alf Lombardi

All companies have the aim to be seen as the experts in their industry, however the ways they go about achieving this can be extremely different.

From media relations and social media, to networking and events, everyone has their own view on becoming established as the leader in their field.

One of the simplest though, can be the use of hard-hitting facts to demonstrate the negative impact that something is having on the world, and the positive impact that your business can have .

This can be done through word-of-mouth, social media, media and public relations, newsletters, and more.



Seeing the Light

Harvard Engineering is a world leader in the design, development and manufacture of control products for the lighting industry, including the innovative LeafNut monitoring and control system for street lighting.



The company wanted to increase awareness of LeafNut with key personnel in local authorities and highlight the benefits of dimming street lighting rather than switching them off.

To do this, the company used a number of hard-hitting facts to demonstrate the negative impact current street lighting is having on energy usage and the positive impact that LeafNut could have.

Market facts were used to demonstrate Harvard's knowledge about street lighting and their energy usage.

These included:



- Street lighting accounts for 40% of a council's energy usage
- There are 7.5 million street lights in the UK costing £500 million per year to run each year and emitting approximately 830,000 tonnes of CO2 per year
- In the UK, there are legal requirements to make carbon reductions of 34% by 2020, and 80% by 2050, based on 1990 levels
- In the US, current estimates show that there are about 52.6 million public roadway lights installed nationwide - 26.5 million street lights and 26.1 million highway lights. According to the US Energy Department's Municipal Solid-State Street Lighting Consortium, these consume the energy equivalent of 1.9 million households and their annual energy and maintenance cost is \$6-8 billion
- There are 1.94 million public lights in Australia, annually costing \$210 million. 1.36 million of these are on minor roads and use as much energy as 80,000 Australia homes

The fact of the matter

By Alf Lombardi

Specific figures were used for each of the countries Harvard targeted with the technology to show they totally understood each market.

Facts about the savings LeafNut could deliver were used, to showcase the technology's capabilities. These included:

- LeafNut can save up to 40% in energy costs and 50% in carbon emissions
- LeafNut can save up to 100kg of carbon per street light per year and up to £46 in energy costs per street light per year
- In Camarles, Spain, the implementation of LeafNut has saved the council 55% on its electricity bill and is projected to cut 690 tonnes of CO2 emissions over the next ten years.
- In Luton in the UK, the installation of LeafNut is expected to save £4 million over next 20 years
- Through the installation of LeafNut, Westminster City Council in the UK is anticipated to reduce carbon by 1.5 million kg a year and make energy savings of £420,000 per year, based on current energy prices.

These figures made Harvard stand out from their competitors as the market experts and they soon became known as the leading company in the field.

Editors regularly contact the company for comments for street lighting articles, Twitter followers over a 12 month period increased from 229 to 819 with people interested in seeing Harvard's views on industry topics, and the company won a number of awards, including the Judges' Choice award at the Financial Mail's Made in Britain awards.

It's all in the research.

Here are your top tips to get your facts right...

1. It's all about research – research your market and collate facts about the issues!
2. Product summary – put together a list of facts about your products that work to combat the market problems you have identified found.
3. Use your facts – contact editors, use social media, and write articles all with both the market facts and the product facts included
4. Keep up-to-date – make sure you keep your facts list up-to-date! The market, and most likely your products, is constantly changing so you need to make sure you are communicating the most up-to-date messages!



Shrewdd Marketing is a growing business-to-business marketing and PR company based in Yorkshire, England. The company offers a full range of marketing disciplines, including strategic marketing, PR, social media, digital marketing, design, advertising, and copywriting and supports a number of innovative companies both with their marketing in the UK and internationally. For more information, please visit www.shrewdd.com.

It's all in the pitch!

By Teana McDonald

As entrepreneurs we are not only trying to make money but we're trying to save money, right? When I first started my business I had grand ideas of all of the fabulous press I would get and all of the clients that would come from the press. I thought that it would be easy to get noticed. I would just send a few emails, make a few contacts and presto, everyone knows my name.

In this industry people, products and services are judged.

If it's not appealing, news worthy or the best thing since sliced bread guess what? Nobody cares!

We all have awesome clients doing some pretty amazing things. We all have thriving businesses that we want people to know about, right?

The hardest part is getting their attention.

The how-to is always puzzling.

Where does one start? Who does one contact? What does one say?

I remember sitting in my office staring at my Mac asking those same questions.

All I knew was that I needed the public to know and understand that I could help them increase their online presence through social media and public relations.

But, how could I do this if I couldn't get any PR myself?

I set a small goal to reach out to 5 local magazines that would benefit both my business and my clients at the same time.

Surprisingly, all of my clients are women-owned businesses and that was how I was going to sell it.

I contacted the editors or owners of these magazines through email then followed up by phone. Some were not interested, some didn't respond but others were intrigued.

One pitch I sent was called, "Broads in Broadcasting" and it was about how women were reinventing themselves in business by creating their own YouTube web series.

The goal was to talk about women -owned businesses becoming more creative and hands on when it comes to going social with their products and services. That was a hit and it was a great article.

The other magazine I pitched always had different monthly contents and giveaways from local businesses.

My approach to this magazine was to get them to write a full color 2-page feature story on my client that designs luxury closets.

With the pitch I suggested that one of the closet designers would come to the winner's home and help them with a closet makeover.

In addition to a closet makeover they would give the winner a \$500 gift certificate towards accessories to help them stay organized.

This turned out to be a story that ran in 2 separate issues.

The first issue was featuring the winner and the closet designer with before and after photos of the makeover. The second issue was a 2-page full color feature on the closet company and what they offer.



It's all in the pitch!

By Teana McDonald

Now it was time to toot my own horn, right?

I managed to secure another contact that I pitched. I spoke about my business, my kids and how I was laid off and reinvented myself in this failing economy.

Not only did I end up on the cover of the magazine, I secured a full color 2-page article about what I do and a full-page color photo of my kids for their new section of the magazine called, "Kids World."

Needless to say, I really did hit the PR jackpot but it took time.

Making the contacts was not easy and it was all through consistency, face-to-face meetings and really cultivating a relationship.

I came from a place of "what can I do for you during the process" not just "it's all about me & my clients."

This type of strategy will work the same in your business.

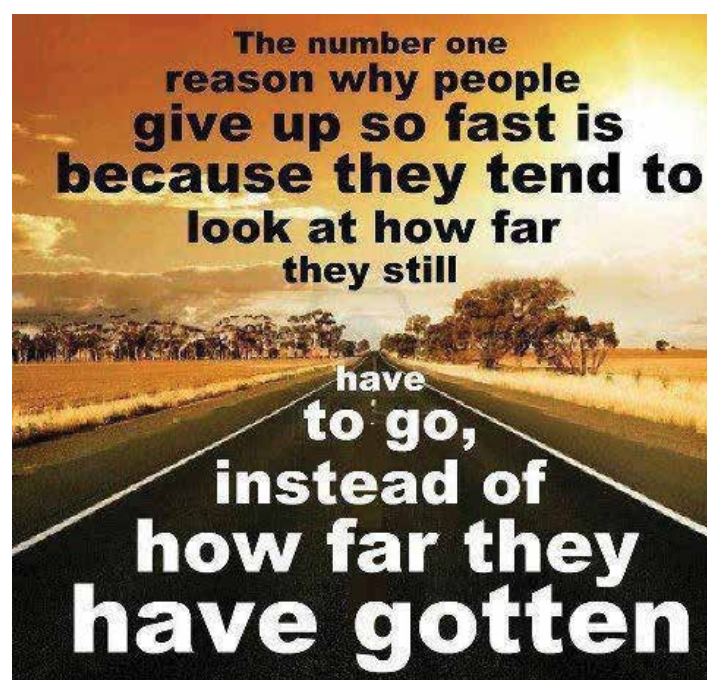
From a plumber to a chef, it's all about making a solid connection and building a relationship.

If you are a therapist, start to think about what makes your practice different and how people can benefit from that- then pitch it.

If you're a matchmaker, find out why so many people are fed up with online dating and provide a personal approach to finding a mate- then pitch it.

If you are a stay at home mom with a business start talking about how you created your product or service out of a need and how it helps simplify the lives of others- then pitch it.

Think about what it is that makes you an expert in your field, add a twist and pitch it. Think about the media outlet and tailor to pitch to fill that need.



It's all in the pitch!

By Teana McDonald

Here are a few steps to get started:

1. Research the magazines, radio and TV stations that you would like to be featured.
2. Find out who the contact is- not the gatekeeper but the decision maker.
3. Reach out to the person whether its through social media, email or phone and work to get them to chat with you (keep in mind that they receive thousands of emails and phone calls a day- so make it count).
4. Once you hear back pitch your story or idea and ask how you can help them as well. For example, one magazine asked me if I had a contact at a furniture store so they can use their kitchen showroom to shoot their next month's cover. I gladly made the connection.
5. After the feature goes live work with the media outlet to promote it, circulate it and spread the news.
6. Continue to keep the relationship going and create a good trustworthy professional relationship.
7. Become a resource for them. I have several editors that call me on the fly to ask for a comment for a story or to ask if I have a woman -owned business that specializes in a certain industry and the list goes on.



Execution is key to creating a consistent public relations campaign.

Be the pitch that stands out in that pile of emails and don't give up! It's possible!

Teana McDonald shares her enthusiasm and passion for social media, public relations and entertainment at 3EConnections. Teana has worked with a number of diverse clients who trust and appreciate her services and unique approach to "getting things done". She is a Past President of the National Association of Women Business Owners, former Co-host of NBC's Miami Moms and popular web series 3 Loud Women. Teana is a monthly contributor to South Florida Parenting and Pompano Today magazines. These platforms give her the opportunity to share her experiences with the everyday entrepreneur that's juggling life, their own passions, a career, and a family. Continue the conversation and connect on Twitter @3econnections or send her an email info@3Econnections.com Website: <http://www.3EConnections.com>

FREE Media!

By Ed McMasters

Increase brand recognition by capitalizing on FREE media opportunities and promoting these opportunities into additional FREE media placements – creating a *Ripple Effect* of FREE Media by **Promoting the Promotion!**



Getting business and retaining business starts with getting your name out there, letting people know what you do, who you are and why you are important!

Publicity is a great way to rise above the norm; it adds credibility and branding power getting your company noticed.

Discover what you want to share, perform a media audit of your company find a niche within your business that you could highlight and share with the media.

It could be the announcement of a new employee, a new marketing campaign, an award, a nomination, a speaking engagement, an anniversary or an event.

Utilize your media audit in planning your media strategy. Press releases can tell folks where you are going, when you are there and what you were doing there.

All three; before, during and after, are potential additional media placements that could ripple into even more media – all for FREE!

Here are the top categories to focus on during your media audit that will lead to multitudes of FREE Media.

Awards are an immediate way to promote your company, your product, your performance and your partnerships.



During your media audit, check to see if your industry offers any award competitions or if there are any local competitions that you could enter your company, your product, your CEO or even yourself. Once entered, promote that you entered, when you are a finalist and when you receive your award.

Done right, each contest could warrant three media placements and you could parley the award announcements into additional media placements and perhaps a feature article.

Use the award and following press placements as a way to get noticed.

(HINT: Hot right now are Green Awards, are you or your company doing anything Green; are you recycling cans, reusing paper, putting in LED lighting?

Aside from those activities alone being media material entering your actions into a Green Award competition could return huge benefits.)

Push the momentum, ask that your partner company shares the press release or creates their own that names your company in the content.

Awards can benefit your partners and you, take a piece that you created for a client that receives an award, and craft a congratulatory press release that highlights your partnership.

FREE Media!

By Ed McMasters

Let your partner tell your story; this builds credibility and the cross referencing is perfect for SEO building and branding. Mention the other companies that won the awards, especially if they are big name companies.

Your goal is to build a *HALO effect*, adding to your credibility through name association with these big name companies. This will also help with SEO. i.e. *If P&G were a contest winner the same as you, place their name in your press release. When people search P&G your press release appears, building more SEO and creating a brand association or inferred partnership.*

Utilize social media as an additional FREE outlet.

Post your winning award releases on Facebook, Linked In and Twitter; add pictures and include links to the award website, the article in a publication or the press release itself.

Show the award, your CEO accepting the award and the piece that was won, most importantly be certain to TAG your photos and include captions. Tags build relationships enabling those tagged to easily spread your content.

Charitable activities are another opportunity for FREE Media.

These activities provide the opportunity for your company to give something back to the community and they create Feel Good stories that the media loves.

Find a cause that is relative to your business or perhaps to an employee. Selecting a cause that one of your employees is active with will add a human element.



Participate in a philanthropic or charity event and encourage your employees to participate on behalf of the company.

Go a step further and in your press releases, name the other companies that participated in the charity activity that you selected.

Use these big name companies to drive traffic to your press release through SEO search.

It is important to promote your participation; i.e. *90% of our employees ran Cincinnati's Heart Mini Marathon and raised \$1,000 for the cause.* Share good news, the media wants to promote these types of activities.

Anniversaries should be included in the results of your Media Audit.

ANNIVERSARIES

Are any of your employees celebrating anniversaries with your company? Is there a piece of machinery that is reaching a milestone; age of the machine, producing an enormous number of products or receiving a make-over?

You can connect with the manufacturer and ask that they repurpose your press release, circulate it or perhaps you will generate a story in their corporate newsletter. A story like this could lead to a sales example to grow their business and improve your partnership. Provide pictures, remembering that media publications like FUN events and imagery.

FREE Media!

By Ed McMasters

The **Media** itself should be a primary component of your media Audit.



Determine who you want to pitch and what is best to pitch them; do your homework.

Do not pitch a manufacturing story to a food critique.

Read articles that you could have been mentioned in, could be an expert for or reflect your industry.

Contact the writer, include a compliment or reference to their article you read and extend the offer to provide additional information; see if they could use your expertise in a follow-up article.

Once an article is online, practice *Piggy-Backing* by posting a comment about the article that adds information, clarifies or offers an alternative approach.

Create an association with the writer, editor and the readers demonstrating your expertise on the matter.

Contact your industry publications and share your corporate story, when one “bites” and writes about you, take that media placement and share out with the local media, other industry publications and national media – work to get more press, generate the ripple.

Then extend your media search beyond your industry, include fringe publications with which you have a degree of expertise or can provide interesting topics. i.e. *If you are a family business, approach family business publications and ask them to write about your company regardless of the industry you are in – look for cross-overs.*

When you get an article about your company and it includes a media interview or photo-shoot, take your own pictures of the media event and place those images in your Media Alert and on social media. i.e. *our post on Social Media: “...here are images from our photo shoot with The New York Times, look for the article in next week’s Sunday issue.”*

Continue to build your media prowess by using publications in which you have been referenced as hooks to get more media.

Include your media success in your outreach letters, in your press release boiler plate, in your email signature and especially on your website. i.e. *“...as quoted in The New York Times.” This statement alone adds extreme credibility and admiration. One reporter stated “WOW, The New York Times, well then you must be an expert if The New York Times referenced you!”*

Write your releases with little to no need for edits, report like a reporter, write like a writer and edit like an editor.

FREE Media!

By Ed McMasters

Be certain that your press releases are written in a way that they can be cut and pasted to form an article.

The less they have to do with your content the more apt they are to publish it and then look to you first for future content.

To get started there are over 20 FREE press release sites (<http://mashable.com/2007/10/19/press-releases/>) that are willing to post your content instantly.

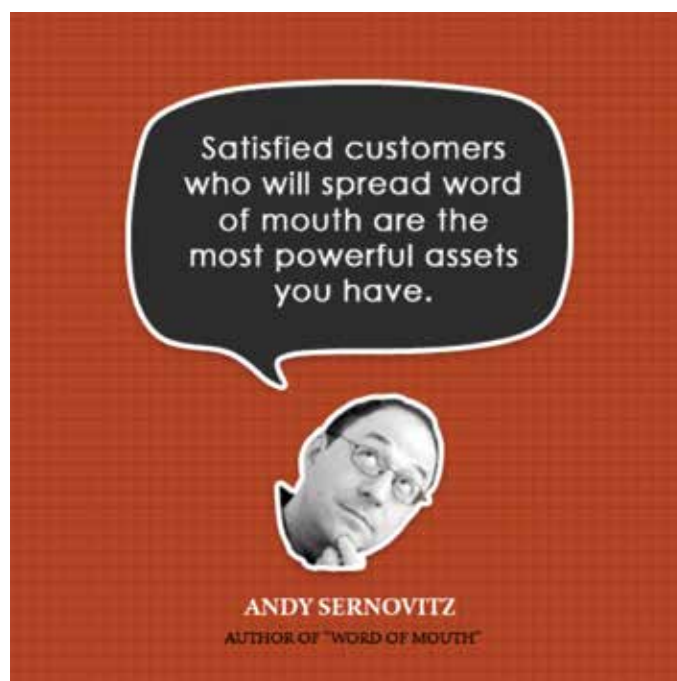
Then via social media, repost the press release to promote the promotion of your content and build that wave of media.

Use your media audit to develop topics and content for press releases and your FREE media placements – promote before, during and after an event.

These layers of media and publicity will build your brand and do so for FREE!

Ed McMasters is the Director of Marketing & Communications for Flottman Company, a multi-channel communications specialist and provider of strategic marketing solutions, miniature folded pharmaceutical literature and complete commercial printing. Ed personifies the importance of treating public relations as an extension of marketing, advertising and the overall brand image. Ed has over 25 years of experience working with such industry giants as Sony, Nintendo, Microsoft, P&G, Interkultur and Major League Baseball. Combining Ed's talents with the 92 years of experience from Flottman Company; our goal is to empower businesses to Communicate Brilliantly.

www.flottmanco.com



Just Ask!

By Adrienne Mazzone

There is sometimes a misconception about being a publicist that make people say, I wish I had your job.

Other publicists know that it isn't easy even if we have the ability to make it look like it's a breeze.

We have to constantly create angles, excitement and interest for the media to keep writing and covering your client. I work with The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, a national 501c3, headquartered in Fort Lauderdale for over three years now.

Always trying to make them stand out from other organization and get the word out that the monies raised goes direct to the people affected by MS.

Last year was our first fashion show luncheon at the iconic Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale and very excited, we hit the media hard with a tremendous turn out. The event, for our first luncheon, raised funds and created a nice buzz.

Now here's the challenge, how do you top or make the next fashion show as good if not better?

It's all in the PR stunts.

I'm a firm believer in stunts to generate media interest, even if the company or product is amazing, you still sometimes need that special stunt to stand out.

You'll find that most media enjoy when there's a stunt or spin, it's being creative that lures them in and not just a media tip of who, what, when, where and why.

Add that catchy, different and unique ingredient whether it's a visual opportunity, a name celebrity or just the show must go on circumstance and the media will come!

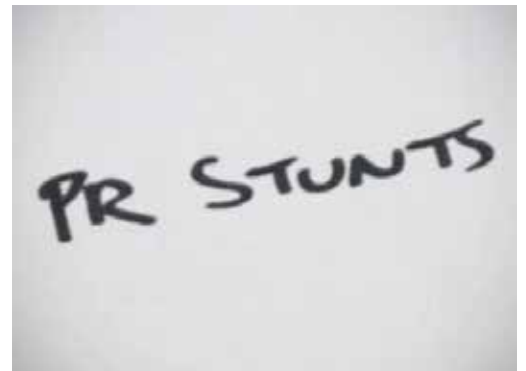
To top the first fashion luncheon benefitting the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, where all the committee women were wearing boxing gloves in the society section of the Sun Sentinel, one of Florida biggest newspapers, I had to come up with something better and different.

A Sand Sculpture dedicated to the cause, created for ticket sales kick off a month prior with all the committee women barefoot in the sand to show support was just what media was looking for and the commitments to come and cover from TV to show the progress of the Sand Sculpture, John May did the trick.

You can just substitute trick for stunt, btw.



JUST ASK.



Just Ask!

By Adrienne Mazzone



I had a client, acclaimed attorney and watch dog for the American people and founder of Judicial Watch Larry Klayman. He was suing OPEC, yes if not the largest, one of the well-known oil conglomerates that is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

Let's do it, we'll wave the smoking gun and picket while Larry serves his papers.

Yes, that's me in the picture, the picketing publicist, and I don't mind as I always say we are a full service PR firm and like to see our clients pleased with our creative ideas.

Success, The New York Times gave us a full page story as well as all the Vienna press and spurred a chain of investigations in the matter.

Whether a national foundation or an individual with strong beliefs wanting to be heard. It can be done. All you need is to jump into your think tank, swish around a while and when you get out stick with your plan.

Let's say you're an inventor, that's usually a great way to think of every company, product or individual and you want to be successful and make money, help people or maybe it's neither, you just want to live your life to its fullest and have to be successful in order to do that.

All your moves matter as sometimes, you have to strike the iron while it's hot. Sitting idle is not good. You don't want to be old news. Keep moving. What's hot is what people want and continuous motion is needed.

The internet is there for you. Use it. Searches can lead to ideas, contact and even more inventions. No matter what your invention is, go search and know what anything even remotely similar is doing. What media was interested in their invention? Not saying to copy, but if something worked for them, you know you have to come up with something better. If you can afford or can find a sponsor that believes in your invention, get a spokesperson and keep them active.



Who's your target audience?

What are your goals?

Where do you see yourself in a year from now?

Just Ask!

By Adrienne Mazzone

First should be your announcement so people know about you or yours.

You can put out a press release, tweet, facebook, LinkedIn and then share and ask others to share. Get feedback, keep their interest even if they might not be your immediate audience or target as you may or may not know, life is a big circle and that feedback might just come into play later on.

Talk to people. I find talking will keep spurring ideas, contacts or get you to the person that was included in your goals. What types of events can you be a part of? Get involved. If you see or meet someone I would call a person of public interest, ask if you can be in a picture. Than tweet that out to world. Show off as much as you can. It doesn't do you any good to just keep that picture for yourself. What's your hashtag? Keep up with the times, know the slang and if you like what I'm saying LMK.

Adrienne Mazzone, Executive Vice President, TransMedia Group

(www.transmediagroup.com) has successfully reached goals of many clients from arranging a prominent Gala, Golf Tournament and Fashion Show for The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, a national charity to placing talent, scouting locations, securing crews, product placements and more for various film academies, independent award winning films, TV segments, Infomercials, as well as live presentations, seminars and panels at Global summits.

Walking in the footsteps of her father, former NBC TV Vice President Tom Madden (<http://www.transmediagroup.com/tmadden.php>), Adrienne has been surrounded by the entertainment industry for many years in many different areas from behind the scene production, audience participation and coordinator to networking projects to award-winning production teams and then publicizing and marketing each project. Current projects are The Annual #Fashion4MSF Luncheon at the iconic Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale and the MSF Annual #Par4Cause, as well as the StyleBarSpa.com that caters to celebrities located in Palm Beach, originally from the Hamptons, 12 year old author McKenzie Wagner, who is now on her third book, 3D artist Art Siegel, who mixes photography with architectural designs, among many others. Previously published in DietarySupplementNews.com; The Entrepreneurette Gazette; COMMPR.Biz and listed on the IMDB.com as well as cited in many articles that appeared in MEDILL Reports; Examiner.com; The Jimmy Starr Show and STUPH Files with Peter Anthony Holder.

BE SO GOOD
THEY CAN'T
IGNORE YOU

—STEVE MARTIN

How to spend your last \$20 on a martini at the bar and use it to leverage a PR campaign for your new company

By Kojenwa Moitt

Many entrepreneurs recognize that public relations, while necessary, is an ongoing substantial investment. Yet few Startups have the capital to invest in tactical strategies that will communicate and significantly leverage the worth of their brand.

I'm going to prove that you can be broke or at least spend very little and get a lot of mileage out of strategies that will result in good publicity over a lifetime.

Some of the best advice I've ever received in business is to couch your semantics in the form of an invitation.

This is especially the case when it comes to meeting journalists who can help you get the word out about your company. No one wants to feel like work is a chore and this is especially true for tired reporters who receive in excess of fifty pitches and hour. Also, it is important to think of how you can serve someone else other than yourself.

In this strategy session, you will want to find a fun free event where you can invite guests and then think of two or three reporters you want to know, who at the same time, care deeply about your area of industry and would at least be interested in talking about it.

Since reporters are the best way to get the word out about your awesome company, think carefully about what makes you and your brand unique.

This is what I call the element of hysteria.



It really doesn't matter whether you make chicken wings or socks for a living.

There is always something you can do to ensure your position in the marketplace is sound.

I met an auto body shop one time that had all of its classic remodeled vehicles with chromed out rims and engines on display at Bryant Park.

You can't imagine how many people hovered around to take photos in those cars.

The company's owners I later discovered, had secured several press engagements on this marketing tactic alone. It became an instant publicity and social media frenzy hit.

Now what could you do to create your element of hysteria if you made chicken wings for a living?

You might form an alliance with a catering company that works with movie productions.

Then imagine your company landed a contract with a catering company that supplied snacks for Hollywood productions. You could take snapshots of Hollywood celebrities on set raving about your wings and you could add their testimonials to your website.

You even could create outrageous ads in conjunction with the movie trailer and your chicken wing company could become famous. The onus is always on you to create an offering that is compelling and innovative.

I'll spare you the rant on making certain to provide the market with something it wants rather than pushing out product that no one cares about because I know you know better than this.

How to spend your last \$20 on a martini at the bar and use it to leverage a PR campaign for your new company

By Kojenwa Moitt



Strategy is akin to a game of chess and going into business purely for the purpose of making profit, even if it works at first, is a dead end -- leading, in a worst case scenario, to profit loss and public humiliation.

Now that you've found a fun free social event where you can entertain your reporter, try and meet them at the office before heading out together. This really gives people a sense that you are committed to forming a relationship, are taking the meeting seriously and if you're lucky, you'll get a quick look on the inside of a news desk.

At this stage you've spent in excess of two dollars for a subway token and if you're fancy, maybe you'll decide to take a cab to the venue, which by the way should conveniently be located nearby.

Take the opportunity in this time to get to know your reporter and find out what makes him or her thrive. Every opportunity is yours to seize. I've used his strategy to loop casting directors, agents and reporters into my circle and in every instance it has yielded magical opportunities for my clients.

Since the event you've researched comes with a reception, discuss over drink number two what area your reporter wants to cover and if you've done your research correctly, your interest in one another is mutual and you will serve as a source of inspiration for the next story idea for which your shiny new company will receive all the credit. You should have ten dollars left to leave a tip for your bartender, a slice of pizza and a token to stagger home.

Helpful Tips:



Meetup groups are a nice way to find an event that is sometimes catered and specific to visit: meetup.com.

Gallery openings and other creative art events typically have lovely receptions.

Remember to do your research! Invite your guests to things they would naturally be inclined to want to attend.

Visit the Contact Us page on the media website you are looking to court and find out the names of the editors or reporters you would like to meet.

Senior editors won't have time for you but editors or reporters at a more junior level will likely be interested in talking to you if their area of interest falls within their vertical.

You can also reach out to someone in public relations to produce a list of reporters for you at a rate lower

Once you've negotiated a story idea or serving as a source with your new reporter friend, you want to make certain that anything written in the social media domain links back to the company website or includes a headshot of you.

Any story coming out in an online publication should help to improve your search ranking through Google and you will make sure to archive your material.

How to spend your last \$20 on a martini at the bar and use it to leverage a PR campaign for your new company

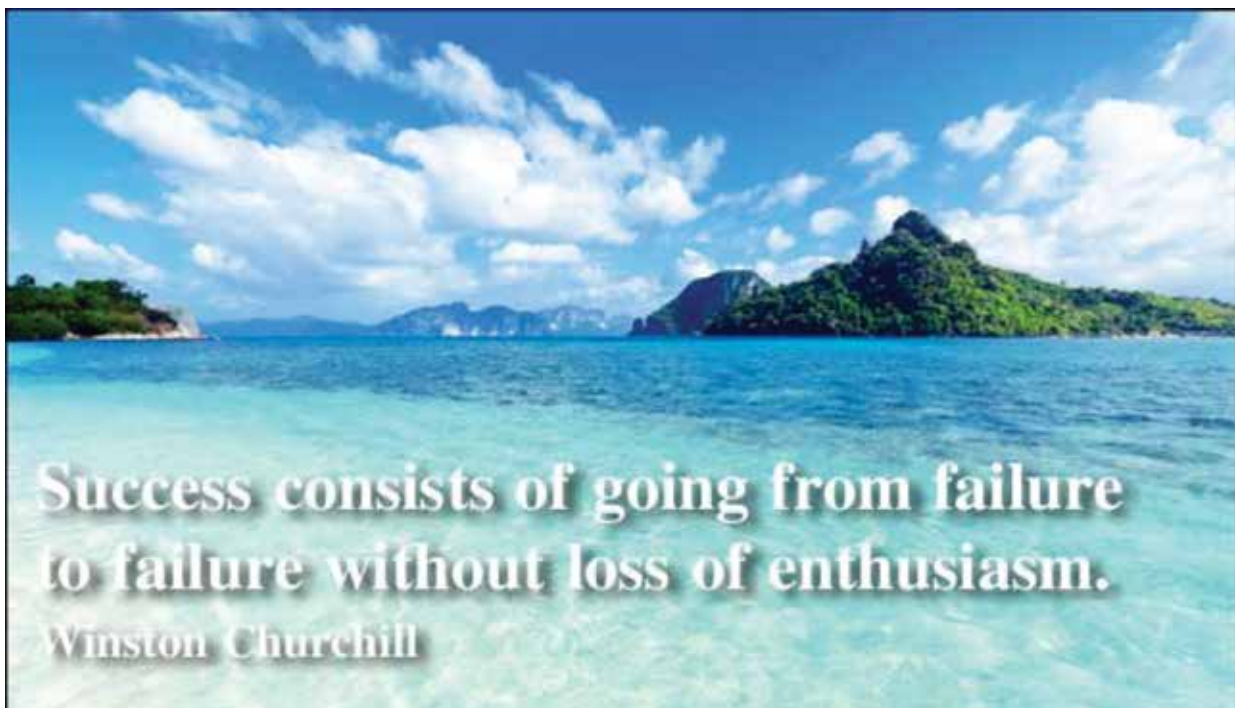
By Kojenwa Moitt

Kojenwa Moitt is currently the CEO and co-founder of Zebra, a PR and business development firm based out of Toronto, Stockholm and New York.

<http://www.zebra.nu>

Specific areas of focus include:

- Image management and PR management
- Leadership development for business executives
- Business development for business executives using innovation methodology
- Social media and branding



Becoming a thought leader

By Niki Schuck, founder Niki Schuck PR



In order to create great content, journalists need people who are experts in their field to interview.

A simple but highly effective PR strategy is to ensure you are that expert that media call first.

ecostore is a client of mine that produces household cleaners, body and baby products.

Their point of difference comes from the values they founded the company on which determine the quality of products they produce.

They are advocates for the environment but more importantly in this sector, for people's health. There are over 80,000 chemicals in the world but only around 280 odd have ever been fully tested.

This means a large number of the products we use every day are full of nasty chemicals.

The impact of these chemicals on our health and wellbeing has never truly been identified.

Many companies claim that they use plant based products which are generally beneficial for the environment but are not always good for our health.

ecostore produces products based on the 'precautionary approach'. This means if there is any doubt about the safety of a chemical whatsoever, they use an alternative.

Unlike most companies not bound by legislation Ecostore fully discloses what is in their products, not only because they believe in openness and honesty but simply because they have nothing to hide.

One of the PR strategies we have used with ecostore is to position the founder, Malcolm Rands as a thought leader - someone who not only thinks about their business but wider issues around them.

By doing this journalists have come to appreciate that Malcolm is a valuable person to speak to because his opinion is worth listening to.

This is a long-term strategy but one that pays off.

Here are two examples of what we are doing to position Malcolm as a thought leader:

1: Idea:



Opinion pieces on topical issues but with a different outlook.

Targeting media whose readers might not be current ecostore customers.

An example of a topic we chose was genetically modified food.

Instead of approaching it from a health scientific angle, we talked about the competitive advantage New Zealand could create positioning itself as a country that produced genetically modified free food.

While Malcolm was referenced as the founder of ecostore at the bottom of the article, ecostore was deliberately not mentioned in the piece, because this is all about Malcolm being a thought leader.

Becoming a thought leader

By Niki Schuck, founder Niki Schuck PR

Result:

With the article going online after it had been printed it created an opportunity to link it to Facebook and Twitter and for comments to be posted by the public creating debate about Malcolm's perspective.

We could gauge from this that the article had been favourably received.



2: Idea:



Six weekly media breakfast meetings. Targeting media with an interest in health, beauty, eco issues as well as specific news journalists. The events are only 45 minutes long in respect of how time-poor journalists are. The topics are chosen because they will be of interest to media and offer a chance for them to increase their knowledge. Malcolm speaks at the event but we often have a guest speaker who is an expert in the area.

An example is "Bee Aware Month" not directly related to ecostore but an opportunity for Malcolm to speak about ecostore's commitment to the environment, the chemicals in many laundry powders that can affect bees and to raise awareness of the plight of bees and what people can do to help.

Result:

The turnout was fantastic and many of the journalists stayed on at the end talking to Malcolm. Malcolm formed new relationships with media and interviews resulted.

For more information about ecostore: www.ecostore.co.nz

It's important to reiterate that this is a long-term strategy but media appreciate having good talent whose outlook is interesting and offers a point of difference.

If becoming a thought leader is a strategy that appeals, make sure you invest in media training and have a refresher annually.



Niki is the founder of Niki Schuck PR whose clients include high profile companies and organisations mainly in New Zealand but also internationally. They work with several New Zealand celebrities and high profile individuals. Niki is highly regarded in media circles, as is her passion for her charity of choice, Hospice. www.nikischuckpr.com

No news? No problem: how to gain media coverage without hard news

By Amy Shanler

Hard news may make media relations a little easier, but companies that rely solely on product launches, business acquisitions or executive hires as their only media relations activities are miss huge opportunities for coverage.

By auditing for assets and evaluating stakeholders' wants and needs, any organization can develop a rich list of pitch-worthy stories to generate coverage between hard-news periods.

In addition, this content can feed other PR/marketing efforts, such as social media, Web site updates, and internal communications.

Finally, by providing a mix of story ideas to media, stakeholders develop a fuller understanding of the company, which often leads to a more favorable reputation.

Search Inside:

The first step in this process is to look closely at the inner workings of the company. Make a list of every department and function such as human resources, marketing, product development, research, finance, and operations.



Then, dig into each department to uncover good news. For example, in human resources, look at the tenure of employees, the benefits you offer, any awards employees have won for community service, unique recruiting practices, or an industry veteran's perspective best practices in HR. Meet with some members and leaders of the various departments to ask them about bright spots they see in their work.

As you collect these ideas, do not worry about editing the list or picking up the phone to talk to a reporter just yet. Simply make a list of all the ideas you can find and the people related to each one. Move systematically through every department. Before long, you will have an extensive array of potential stories.

For smaller companies, there may be fewer people or formal departments, but the functions still exist (although one person may oversee two, three or all areas). A smaller workforce does not mean fewer options for potential PR stories. In fact, resource-constraints may force the organization to be even more creative in its operations, which is another potential story angle in itself.

Look Beyond Your Walls:

After the internal audit, companies should make an extensive list of stakeholders, such as customers, employees, investors, neighbors, government/industry officials and media. For each stakeholder group, list what that group wants from the organization. For example, neighboring businesses may want support for local community issues; employees may want new challenges to help advance their careers; and customers likely want the best products at the best prices with the best service.

Look back now at the list of assets from the company's perspective and see how aligns with what stakeholders seek. Any overlapping topics should move to the top of the priority list for media outreach.

If we stay on the HR example, we may see that employees seek new challenges to help advance their careers. At the same time, one of the assets uncovered is that a number of employees have stayed engaged and fulfilled by successfully changing functions across the organization. This combination is perfect for a media pitch about creative ways to advance careers without relying on promotions or salary increase alone.

No news? No problem: how to gain media coverage without hard news

By Amy Shanler

Find the Right Voice(s):

For each hot topic you uncover that showcases how an organizational asset meets a stakeholder need or desire, determine who would be the best spokesperson (or spokespeople). It could be the department/function head, a subject-matter expert, or someone outside the organization (perhaps a member of the particular stakeholder group).

For the HR example, look for an internal organizational behavioral expert or leader, and the manager of someone who successfully switched departments or an employee who made the transition. The more perspectives you can offer to tell a complete story with multiple sources, the easier it will be for a reporter to jump right in on the story.

Next, look for any third-party support for your pitch idea. Is there employment data research, an industry analyst, or even an HR expert outside the company who can validate your angle? If finding the right third-party expert is difficult, ask the internal subject-matter experts for ideas, do some Internet searches, and look at previous articles for ideas. While not critical to the success of your pitch, any external validation will increase your credibility with a reporter.

Focus Your Efforts:



As you move through this process, the list of potential media pitches starts to narrow down to the strongest angles that are meaningful to your potential audiences and that tell a complete story. Keep the less-developed ideas handy so you can add experts and data to them over time, but continue working primarily with the shorter list of solid media pitches.

The next step is to determine the right media audience. As publications seek to offer the best content to attract and engage more readers, they rely on their own unique personalities.

Therefore, one story will be the best fit for one specific outlet. However, the publication's readership needs to align with the organization's intended audience of customers, employees, neighbors, or other important stakeholders.

The HR story on employees changing career paths could work in any number of business journals and HR trade publications. It could also work in the trade magazines or online sites for the specific industry in which the company operates, or the local or regional news outlets where the company operates. Reviewing the potential media outlets, understanding the types of stories they cover, and learning who writes the content will help find the best targets for non-news pitches.

Spread the Word:



With a thoughtful strategy, strong story concept and sources, and a focused recipient, companies of any size n hard-news cycles can develop proactive stories for reporters. In addition, this content works well with other communication vehicles.

A profile of the successful career-changing employee could be a feature on the company's recruiting website or social media pages. It could also serve as content for an internal newsletter, a talking point in a HR industry conference speech, or a one-to-one conversation with a potential recruit.

No news? No problem: how to gain media coverage without hard news

By Amy Shanler

Be sure to time the reuse of this material for when the article is published because reporters want “fresh” stories, not ones they see splashed everywhere. However, when the article is published, put it to work across all communication channels.

Case Study:

Philips, the diversified health and well-being company, took this approach when promoting itself as a great place to work in the United States. Starting with the internal audit, the company found its flexible work schedule, time-off-for-volunteering policy, and emphasis on personally meaningful work were unique angles to pursue with the media.

Without hard news, Philips conducted media outreach to various labor-market trade publications, which piqued the interest of larger media outlets. Early contributed content in HR-focused sites such as TLNT and Undercover Recruiter provided good exposure that led to new opportunities such as an article on Stylecaster, a popular blog, about finding the right job, and a quote in US News & World Report about creating a more engaged workforce. The cumulative effect of pitching Philips and some of its HR policies, without any hard news, culminated in a spotlight on Forbes.com positioning the company’s healthcare division as #No. 2 in doing the most to make employees happy (see Forbes.com: The 10 Companies With The Biggest Jumps In Employee Happiness, Aug. 22, 2013).

TAKE ACTION

Take Action: All organizations, no matter their size, have good stories to tell. With the breadth of publications and websites seeking original content, companies have nearly unlimited opportunities to generate positive publicity without having traditional hard-news angles.

Starting this process takes only one first step. When meeting with a colleague from another department, ask what makes that department or function special or unique when compared to other departments in the organization or industry. That will spark a discussion with the potential to open new doors to positive media relations.

Amy Shanler, a 17-year veteran in public relations, is director of PRLab, the oldest student-run PR agency in the United States (www.bu.edu/prlab), and a visiting assistant professor of the practice of public relations at Boston University’s College of Communication. Amy can be reached via email at shanlera@bu.edu.

Preparing the boss for media interviews

By Kevin L. Sullivan

Chief Marketing Officer, Fisher & Phillips LLP



Savvy executives and business owners know that a good public relations program can build a brand and burnish a reputation. Good PR costs less than advertising and it lends credibility to your organization, products and services.

Even when an executive believes in PR, if he is not trained or experienced it is important to properly prepare him before granting any interviews.

No executive should appear unprepared when representing his organization during an interview. Just as importantly, he should not come across as arrogant or aloof.

A key to ensuring that the boss performs well is to train him for media interviews.

(Even experienced and trained executives would benefit from a quick refresher course when a crisis arises, but that's a topic for another article.)

The following is a quick-reference guide for anyone dealing with the media. It is not a guide for serious crisis management, but is a playbook for more routine media interviews. Think of them as "The ABCs of Media Interviews." If the interviewee knows the alphabet, then he should not stumble by misstating facts, appearing unprepared or acting in an unfriendly manner.

So, now you're the coach. Get your boss ready for the interview with these guidelines.

- A. People relate to people, so be yourself.
- B. Be relaxed, attentive and alert.
- C. Be prepared by reviewing notes, articles, company documents or anything else that will help you to be prepared. Formulate three or four key messages to touch on during the interview.
- D. Do not use jargon.
- E. Keep your sentences short and to the point. Avoid parenthetical phrases.
- F. Incorporate part of the question into your answer. For example, to answer the question, "Do you think that the new product will meet analyst expectations," do not say, "Yes it will," but answer with, "We anticipate the product will meet analyst expectations because..."
- G. You can control the interview. If the reporter doesn't address your key points, bring them up. You can use an old trick politicians like; acknowledge the question but shift to another topic. "That's an interesting question, but what's important is...."
- H. Do not feel pressured to say anything you don't want to say. If a reporter uses long pauses to encourage you to elaborate further than you are willing, don't fall into the trap.
- I. Do not speak "off the record." This is an important rule that will keep you out of trouble.
- J. Make eye contact when you are interviewed in person.
- K. When being interviewed over the telephone, stand up. You will sound more alert and energetic.

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L. Set up important points with pauses or phrases such as:

What's most important to know is...

Let me put it into perspective...

Before we get off that subject/topic, let me add...

What I'm really here to talk about is...

Let me give you some background information...

Let's take a closer look at...

That's an important point because...

M. Use examples to support your assertions.

N. Never say, "No comment." If you can't answer a question for any reason, explain why. For instance, you might be under a gag order or the reporter asks a question outside your area of expertise or responsibility.

O. Never get angry.

P. Never speak negatively about anyone – especially your competition.

Q. Never use inappropriate language.

R. Do not be condescending to a reporter even if the journalist doesn't understand everything you are discussing.

S. Always return calls to journalists promptly and let them know that you are accessible.

T. Do not try to get too "cozy" with a reporter; stay professional.

U. Remember the ABC's of Media Interviews: Accuracy; Brevity; Clarity.

The ABCs of Media Interviews are meant to provide a checklist that you can use to prepare the boss before a media interview. With good training, an executive should be in a position to use public relations to his advantage.

Kevin L. Sullivan is the Chief Marketing Officer for Fisher & Phillips LLP, a national labor & employment law firm with 285 attorneys in 31 offices across the United States. He is responsible for the firm's award-winning PR program. The author has held senior marketing positions in B2B companies and public relations firms, and spent 15 years as a TV journalist. He can be reached at ksullivan@laborlawyers.com or 404-240-4248.

Perfect Pitch – 4R's For Successful Publicity

By Jane Tabachnick

One of my favorite strategies for getting publicity is pitching your story idea directly to a publication.

Getting it picked up is both satisfying and rewarding; done right the results can include immediate publicity and often yield future opportunities as you are laying the foundation for long term relationships with journalists and media outlets.

Pitches done wrong, or off topic, can piss off a journalist and even get you banned by them for life.

It's one of the biggest complaints I hear from the media - journalists, bloggers, and TV producers. The off topic pitch is one that is obviously not a fit for their audience. When, I say obviously, I mean that with a little research on them you would know that their sport publication doesn't cover fashion, and the Herald Sun doesn't cover news about New York businesses, unless of course there is an incredibly compelling story or a local connection.

To achieve perfect pitch, and the publicity results you are seeking, a small amount of research and preparation can go a long way

Here are my top tips for perfect pitch.

Follow my 4 R's for successful publicity and the world is your oyster; you'll get more pitches accepted and have journalists seeking you out -calling you when they need an expert resource for a story they are working on.

Right story



It starts with a great story. While your reasons for wanting publicity may be self-promotional, and that is ok, you have to present your story in such a way that it is compelling, doesn't come across as self-promotional and answers the question "what's in it for them?"

The right story is first off, an interesting one.

It can follow any of the classic story lines such as David and Goliath, the best kept secret, fall from grace etc., as long as it communicates your news without coming across as salesy.

If your story is about an inanimate object like a building or a company, consider adding a human aspect to it. This can turn a dry story into a more compelling one by bringing in a character or person, elements that often create interest or sympathy in the reader or viewer.

Right Publication

Every media outlet has a defined target audience. They can tell you the profile of their reader in any number of statistical ways from their median income, job title, family status and so on. This is all readily available in their media kit which is often downloadable from their website. More importantly, they know what their reader is interested in reading.

You want to make sure before you pitch that you have identified a perfect match between your story and the media outlet. Go beyond the media kit and read a few stories or blog posts, or watch a few on air segments to get a feel for the style before making the pitch to determine if you share the same target audience and are indeed a match.

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Right Journalist

Now that you have identified the right publication, you'll want to drill down and identify the specific journalist, or journalists that cover the sector you are pitching.

You can start by looking at the masthead, newsroom or contact page of publications to see if the author bylines are broken down by beat – what topics or industries and geographic areas reporters cover.

If not, then begin reading articles and watching news segments to identify the correct journalist or reporter. You can always call the editor and ask them who covers your topic or industry; they'll be happy to help direct you to the right journalist.

Right Time

The saying 'timing makes champions' is very true when it comes to the media.

There are a few aspects to making sure you pitch at the right time.

Firstly you'll need to know a media outlet's lead time- how far in advance they create content before it gets published; for example most print magazines begin creating their holiday issues 4-6 months in advance. If you'd like to get your product into their December issue, you usually have to pitch them in or around July.

Another time to be aware of is their editorial calendar. It lets you know what they plan to cover throughout the year, so you'll want to time any pitches on their chosen topics to arrive in time for proper consideration.

Both the editorial calendar and lead times can be found online, often in their media or advertising kit.

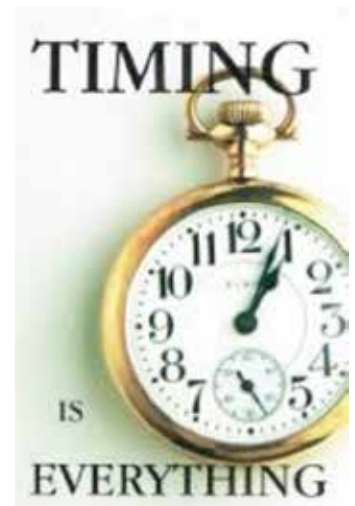
Now that you know the 4 steps to perfect pitch, identify your target publications and the journalists who cover your industry, topic and, if applicable, your geographic area.

A small targeted media list that has been well researched and vetted, will yield much better results than a widespread mass mailing every time.

In a sea of off topic pitches, yours will stand out and be appreciated by the media. It will get the attention and consideration it deserves. Now that you have demonstrated you are professional, have done your homework and know how to work with the media, don't be surprised if they call you unsolicited to feature you in a story.

Starting today, as you read or view media segments, you can begin to note which ones are potential outlets to add to your own media list.

You can set up free Google alerts to deliver customized content to your inbox, based on keywords and brands you designate.



Perfect Pitch – 4R's For Successful Publicity

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Scan the stories for new potential media outlets that fit your target audience and research them further to see if they merit adding to your list. By the time you have a new story idea, you will already have a list of the best media to pitch.

I recently pitched a story to a business magazine that is read by 100,000 of my prospective clients- entrepreneurs and small business owners.

The pitch was about changes to Google that would directly impact the business owners, creating unforeseen and potentially costly changes. The publication was so interested in my pitch; they bumped a story from their upcoming issue to make room for mine. My story was featured in their print and online magazines, as well as the lead story in their email newsletter. The article has created an influx of prospect calls, new clients, as well as a speaking invitation.

BIO Jane Tabachnick lives at the intersection of digital PR, Marketing and content strategy. A serial entrepreneur, buzz builder and product developer, she helps women entrepreneurs build buzz and get their vision and products out into the world. Her passion is creating Do-It-Yourself tools for publicity and marketing. For more information or to contact Jane, visit: <http://www.janetabachnick.com>



Create content once, use many times for PR (and SEO)

By Edward M. Yang, Managing Partner of Firecracker PR



Those in marketing know that “content marketing” has become the centrepiece of most marketing departments, and a critical aspect of successful integrated campaigns.

The term “integrated” is important because more and more, silos are coming down between different marketing functions.

SEO and PR and content marketing do not exist in their own silos any longer. Each bleeds into the other. Done right, each can magnify the benefits of others.

A concrete example of this leverages one piece of content for multiple purposes.

For one client, we created an infographic.

In and of itself, infographics have become relatively commonplace today.

But it's not the creation of the infographic that is special. It is how you use the finished product to achieve marketing goals that can be the difference.

The finished infographic was posted on the topic of telecommuting. A webpage was created on the client's site with a descriptive URL, along with appropriate Title and Description tags. Social sharing icons were put on the page as well.

From there, we submitted the infographic to numerous websites that accept infographic submissions. Some provide a link back to the original website (**quality backlink for SEO**), for instance www.nerdgraph.com.

We also built a list of targeted reporters and bloggers who had written on the subject of telecommuting in the past year, using a mix of an online media database and just Googling news articles.

Our pitches to them were tailored to each individually. We never use mass email blasting programs like Constant Contact. Each email pitch touched on a past article they wrote, then informed them of our new infographic and how it might be useful for one of their upcoming articles.

One pitch that hit pay dirt led to an article in Mashable, along with a link to the client's webpage with the infographic (**quality backlink for SEO, press mention**).

We also posted it on Reddit and some other message boards that led to tweets and retweets (**social media mentions**).

Since then, Googling “telecommuting infographic” yields both the client's webpage and the Mashable article in the top 3 results on Page 1 of Google (**high search engine ranking**) out of 149,000 search results.

For the client's monthly newsletter to their in-house database of prospects and customers, we used the infographic as the lead article (**newsletter marketing**).

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Finally, we took the raw text data of the infographic and used it for a follow up email to our target list of reporters and bloggers. We reminded them of the first email we had sent, and told them this list of stats might be useful for them (press relationship building) since the infographic was in a graphic file format.

Here are the exact steps you too can leverage one infographic into real concrete results for your PR and SEM efforts:

1: Pick a trending topic

One of the keys to being successful in PR is staying on top of hot topics in the news. You'll find that suddenly every writer is talking about one topic for a period of time. Ride that wave. Scour sites like Yahoo News, BuzzFeed, etc.



2: Search existing infographics

See what's already out there. Find out what they're lacking and what you can improve upon. Maybe the other infographics are outdated.

3: Research good, quality data

An infographic is only as good as its data. Find reputable data sources, and make sure to list them in small print at the end of the infographic to give credit to the original writer.

4: Make it pretty

An infographic has to be visually appealing. Don't skimp and use someone from Fiverr. Find a reputable designer on sites such as eLance.com, Freelancer.com or Guru.com. Ask for at least 3 samples of infographics they've done.

5: Give clear guidelines

The more detailed you can be of what you want to the designer, the less heartburn you'll have. If you have no idea, then tell the designer the overall goal and let them take a stab.

6: Post it on your website

Make sure you set the URL of this webpage something descriptive with the keywords in it. Also make sure to write descriptive Title and Description tags. Add social sharing icons so people can easily disseminate it.

7: Research reporters and bloggers

Find out who's written about your topic in the last year. Search Google news or just Google itself. If you subscribe to a media or blogger database, do some keyword research. Search on Twitter as well.

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Pitch them

Write a customized pitch for each. Make an intelligent comment on something they've written. Give them the link to the infographic. Keep it short and be polite.

Post to infographic websites

Do a Google search for "infographic websites" and other variations. Submit them everywhere you can. Some are free, some may require pay. Decide if it's worth paying for it. Pay special attention to whether or not you can leave a link to your website.

Follow up your pitches

For those that didn't run your infographic, send them a follow up email. Include in it a copy and paste of all the data from your infographic in text form and tell them you hope this might be helpful. I find the best way is to reply to your own sent email so they can see your original pitch.

Try Twitter or LinkedIn

Email isn't very reliable. Try directly tweeting them or, if you have a Premium account on LinkedIn, use their InMail system to contact them.

Find other avenues. Where else can you post the infographic? Your Facebook page? LinkedIn? Twitter? A monthly newsletter? Use it as a bribe for opt-in emails?

Following these exact steps will help you get in a mind-set of how you can use content marketing to get you many great results in PR and marketing.

Edward M. Yang is Managing Partner at Firecracker PR. Firecracker PR is an agency that provides three services for one price. We meld the best of public relations, search engine marketing and content marketing into one integrated campaign. Learn more about what we can do for you at www.firecrackerpr.com.

A picture is worth a thousand words.
Napoleon Bonaparte

How to be a thought leader: traditional and new media outlets are a powerful combination

By Evan Zall & Kristina Markos

Professional services firms are unique to the global marketplace in that their value, growth, and succession plans depend entirely upon one factor: the expertise available to clients.

Trust, credibility, and ultimately the strength of the brand flow directly from that knowledge base – without it, firms lack substance and will eventually struggle to retain business.



For public relations and marketing to be effective, they must focus on bringing that expertise to their desired audiences through “thought leadership” strategies that separate them from competitors.

In our work at Ebben Zall Group, we ground our thought leadership strategies with three critical tools: discussion paper, content networking and social media.

When rolled out in a coordinated campaign, these elements provides added credibility and visibility to clients as they circulate amongst their prospects and referral sources.

More directly, campaigns result in:

- 1: Media coverage of expertise
- 2: Higher traffic to firm websites
- 3: Improved connections using social media as a conversational tool

You may wonder how we go about this – and admittedly, it is an easier said than done. But those who commit to capturing and conveying their expertise will see significant benefits.

We start by interviewing our clients on a specific area of expertise; these conversations create a knowledge base that we can draw from to create materials. For more intricate campaigns, the interviews can also be filmed and edited into short videos to be posted to a website, blog, or shared on partner networks.

The first key pillar of the campaign is a long-form discussion paper that we draft based on the interviews and independent research that cites credible third parties (i.e., national or global business publications, analyst firms, or industry trade publications). The paper, which runs about 1,500 words, serves as the basis of our interaction with the press, can be distributed via email campaigns, and filtered into the new business process as leave-behinds for prospects.

We then craft and distribute a press release that details the major points in the paper. With the paper and release in hand, we are well armed to reach out to targeted reporters who have covered relevant topics in the past.

An effective pitch always includes:

1. A friendly introduction
2. A description of the paper and why the subject is timely
3. A mention of a follow up action

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This method of media relations has yielded great success for clients: we secured interviews and coverage in reputable sources like the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, and many more.

However, we would be remiss if we did not address the hard reality of PR --- despite all that work, the traditional media may not bite on every story. That is why campaigns must be multi-faceted to be effective, leveraging additional branches of the PR strategy: repurposing the expertise from the paper on a content network that is made up of relevant websites, and creating awareness and interest on social media.

What is a “Content Network” and how do I use it?



The internet is rife with websites that rely on content from outside experts to draw traffic and remain credible.

Over the last five years, the lines have been blurred between citizen journalism and news reporting -- appealing to both is one of the great challenges of PR.

As we work with journalists to bring valuable stories to their attention, we also work with high traffic, credible content hosts to place blog posts or contributed articles.

Publishing to these sites translates into better Search results on Google and Bing, increased traffic to firm websites, and additional visibility among industry peers. Best of all, these posts sometimes benefit from viral distribution, as “big time” web content publishers (i.e., Yahoo! Finance) may syndicate the content.

The credibility of a content website is crucial – experts should be wary of posting their insight on low value sites. We based our analysis on two elements: the quality of the content and the traffic flow. Content quality can be gauged with a quick read and by vetting other contributors, while traffic can be assessed using the site information tracker. When a URL is entered into this search bar, Alexa reports the website’s ranking – in the simplest terms, the tool shows where the site places in the vast universe of the internet. Sites that rank below 200,000 (the #1 site is, of course, Google.com) are a sound fit for a content network.

Once targeted sites are identified, we approach publishers the same way that we approach journalists. We must sell the story and the value of having our clients’ expertise regularly featured on their website.

Content is still king, and when the strategy is mapped out, it can be a very gracious ruler. When the content network is secured (we recommend three or four sites maximum, with monthly posts to each), shorter form articles can be extracted from the long-form thought leadership paper. The voice and the tone of the content must change a bit, moving from academic and objective to more conversational. When people are browsing the internet, they are looking for skimmable, “easy-to-read” material, so experts should be sure that the articles that are being tailored to appeal to today’s digitally savvy audience.

Where does social media fit?

Professional services firms are perhaps among the last hold-outs on social media.

Regulatory oversight and the real-time flow of information seemed to keep experts wary, but if social media is not a part of a PR strategy, critical opportunities to engage with the audience can pass by.



How to be a thought leader: traditional and new media outlets are a powerful combination

By Evan Zall & Kristina Markos

Without a strategy, however, activity on social media can be perceived as noisy and clumsy. The right approach is shaped from 2 areas: posting content from 3rd party sources, and drawing from original insight that is crafted it into short, interesting updates.

Businesses often make the mistake of using social media to project sales and marketing promotions, but this treats the channels as one-way streets. Social media has evolved into a conversational tool, and while it supports marketing efforts it is designed as a platform for dialogue. Just as guests at a party become alienated with stale conversation, the social media audience becomes disengaged and disinterested when social media feeds do not provide a pulse of relevant information. This is why our clients trust us to monitor their social media efforts, because we are the people who are hired to connect the dots, and encourage conversation.

Social media is also a very effective monitoring tool. When we are in the midst of a well-oiled thought leadership strategy, we stay tuned into Twitter and LinkedIn to keep up with industry news. It is our job to ensure that our client's story fits in with breaking news, and there is no better way to keep tabs on industry conversations than by monitoring hashtags and status updates from other thought leaders.

Consistent credibility builds smart brands

Public relations for professional services is about consistently showcasing expertise through credible content on credible platforms. Simply put, smart content is nothing without smart communications, and smart communications is nothing without smart content. Firms that capture the essence of both will see a profound impact on their business and brand over the long term.



Ebben Zall Group is located just outside of Boston, MA; we provide PR and advertising solutions to a variety of businesses, with a strong focus on thought leadership for professional services. Most importantly, we strive to bring an old school commitment to the new school of mixed media to benefit all our clients. For more information please visit www.ebbenzallgroup.com. Twitter: [@ebben_zall](https://twitter.com/ebben_zall) Facebook: www.facebook.com/ebbenzallgroup

The combined power of storytelling and guerrilla marketing

By Nina Zapala

For over 20 years I've used the power of storytelling powered strategically by guerrilla marketing tactics. This combination has worked successfully for national brands: Motorola, Jackson Hewitt Tax Service, Microtel Inn & Suites, GTE (now known as Verizon Wireless) and hundreds of independent small businesses from around the globe.

Why does storytelling work? In today's age of information abundance your brand is constantly vying for attention. Brand storytelling allows existing and potential customers to connect, engage and become emotionally supportive. It's 'the' best for spreading word-of-mouth referrals, which is the #1 sales tool, period. Facebook has also adopted the 'storytelling' mantra. This past March the social media behemoth incorporated storytelling into their newsfeed algorithms using words like; *Last Actor*, *Chronological by Actor*, *Story Bumping*.



Storytelling is important as it reaches consumers before, during and after the purchase cycle. Think about your own life, have you ever purchased a product from the worlds best story-amplified brands, think: Apple, Zappos, Starbucks, Disney, J. Crew, Nike, and Jack Daniels to name a few? Why do you buy their products? It's not because of an ad it's because you are emotionally connected to their brand story. However, you can't just tell a brand story – as consumers need to familiarize themselves with your brand. How do you entice your target audience to participate? Lean-in? Engage? I for one find that guerrilla marketing tactics are the best, most affordable, and effective. I've listed a few simple guerrilla marketing tactics below. I also suggest you learn more about Jay Conrad Levinson, who has written numerous books on the topic:

Guerrilla Tactics:

- Word-of-mouth campaigns
- Social media channels
- Direct mail/email campaigns
- Publicity
- Co-branded promotions
- Cause marketing campaigns
- Sales techniques

Below are two case studies: in which storytelling, coupled with guerrilla marketing tactics yielded results far beyond client expectations.

Client Case Study One: YouTonics: A Facebook Sampling

Challenge: YouTonics had zero brand presence and was unknown. To run a cost effective traditional print campaign millions would've been spent, not an option based on budgets. Yet YouTonics, a category buster in the collagen renewal sector needed a "big idea" to launch this beauty/supplement brand. A Budget of \$65,000 was given to ignite product interest and launch YouTonics on the international stage. For a national product launch this budget was uncharacteristically low.

Strategy: Research showed that sampling was the best way to spark sales in the beauty/supplement category. Based on these findings a Facebook guerrilla-marketing sample promotion was developed. The promotion included a Facebook promotional tab, that captured email address, plus a strategic publicity and Twitter campaign along with Facebook sponsored 'story' advertisements.

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Implementation: An eye-catching tab was designed and a teaser campaign ensued before the official tab launch. As administrators we encouraged our small tribe of fans, 58 in all, to share with their friends and family so they too, could receive a free YouTonic sample. Journalists were sent branded press packages to include full bottle samples, and a media relations campaign targeted to free sites was also implemented. Twitter helped us reach bloggers, celebrities and more. These affordable guerrilla marketing tactics saved money allowing for an additional 250 samples for the giveaway, which was a primary goal.

Results: A plethora of stories were told, shared, Tweeted and posted. The campaign exceeded expectations. Over 500 samples were claimed within 72 hours. YouTonics gained over 5,500 new 'Likes', while over 18,000 fans were engaged on the page.



The campaign increased website traffic by 88%. Magazine editors had posted as well, helping to drive traffic to Facebook and Twitter.

A PowerPoint results presentation was developed. To leverage the campaign success I suggested to the sales team they utilize the results presentation as part of their selling process to showcase interest and the demand for the product. This tactic worked. YouTonics secured shelf space in Walgreen's, Amazon.com, Drugstore.com and others. The campaign stayed in budget and won several statewide awards presented by the Florida Public Relations Society.

Case Study Two A 22-page editorial spread in the 2011 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue; reinvigorates the brand

Challenge: Peter Island Resort & Spa, a luxurious private island, in the British Virgin Islands, had fallen off the 'it' list.

Strategy: A branded storytelling campaign was launched.

Implementation: A limited budget of \$55,000 was given to generate international exposure for Peter Island. A media relations campaign was launched aimed at the wildly popular Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue (SI). For one year I worked with the producers sending them suggested photo shoot locations to include the resort and many other hidden photographic opportunities. The SI producers promise a feature in the 2012 edition but I kept on persisting. By mid-November, 2011 I got the call. One of the resort selections was not working. In less than three weeks the entire SI team was onsite and the shoot wrapped within two weeks. A whirlwind for sure but success was achieved.

Results: An editorial windfall; a coveted 22-page spread in the 2011 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue, published in 2012. The placement had an advertising value of seven million dollars, but more importantly it illustrated through a great story why Peter Island was still the "it" destination in the British Virgin Islands. The publication's international reach bolstered revenue as the resort experienced a 5% growth while others Caribbean resorts were flat or lost sales. The editorial also netted two additional marketing initiatives to include a social media and a resort sales campaign both utilized the SI editorial as support collateral. The Sports Illustrated Swimsuit editorial also won a coveted Platinum Award presented by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International; again generating recognition for the resort.

How can you incorporate the art of branded storytelling and guerrilla marketing tactics to your business? I've used storytelling and guerrilla marketing tactics for financial institutions, architects, jewelers, tax services, schools and many others. I've listed basic storytelling steps below while simple guerrilla marketing tactics were shared above. Please note; each business has a unique DNA, which assists me in developing a unique branded story persona and result-producing guerrilla marketing tactics.

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Storytelling steps:

1. The Backstory – What has brought you to the place you are today? Research competitors both direct and indirect. Check trends, economic forecasts and more
2. Character profile for 'you the brand' – Take a deep look at your brand. What are your core benefits, beliefs and values? Are you meeting expectations? Do consumers get what you have to sell? How are you different from the rest?
3. Character profile for your target audiences – What about your brand resonates with your prospective or current customers? What are you missing? Can you better engage with, and build emotional connections tapping your customer's beliefs, core values and daily expectations?
4. The prospect relationship process – How can you integrate your brand with your customer? Can you ignite relationships based on shared beliefs and values? What's the best fit? Where are the obstacles? They usually fall into these categories:
 - Awareness
 - Understanding
 - Confidence
 - Affinity
5. Complete the brand's story proposal – This is a combination of your brand's functionality in relation to customer expectations. Additionally, the story proposal should highlight shared beliefs and values between your brand and your target audiences. This exercise can be completed using "I am" statements. A great book to read on this subject matter is StoryBranding by Jim Signorelli.



About: Nina Zapala is often quoted as an industry expert and has recently been featured on The Travel Channel, Huffington Post, O'Dwyer's Public Relations Magazine and others. She is a tenured marketing/communications professional who has built her 20+ year career using strategic brand storytelling coupled with guerrilla marketing tactics to deliver exceptional results time-and-time again. Please visit her at www.zapalpr.com and feel free to email on nina@zapalapr.com to ask questions or leave comments.

Summary:

Thank you very much for taking the time to read

'Million Dollar PR Advice Volume One'.

I trust you got both inspiration and some helpful ideas from reading what 21 PR Experts have shared in this guide.

Here are a few thoughts I'd like to leave you with...

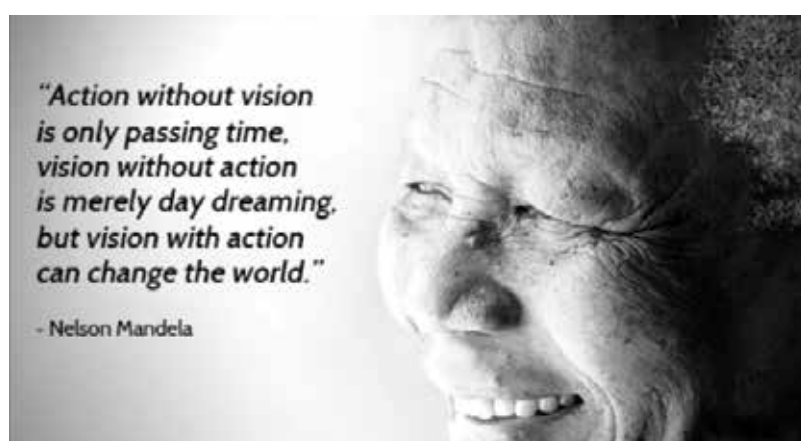
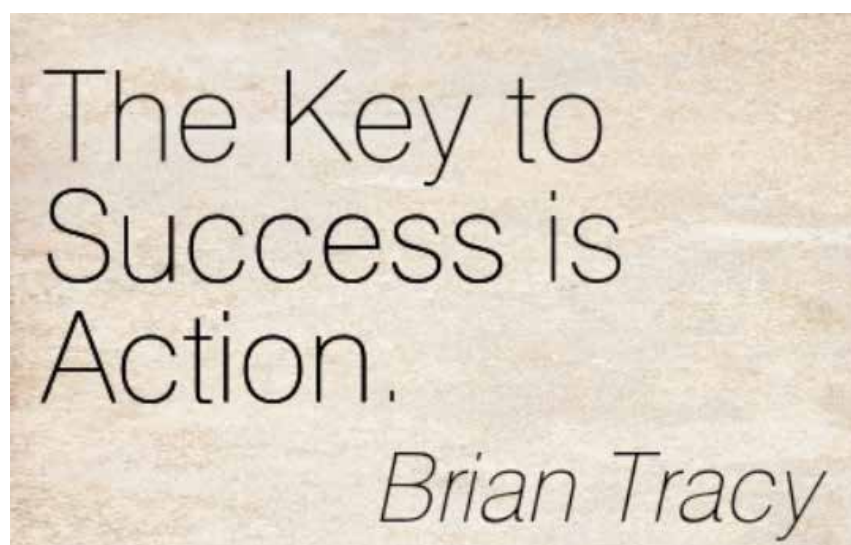
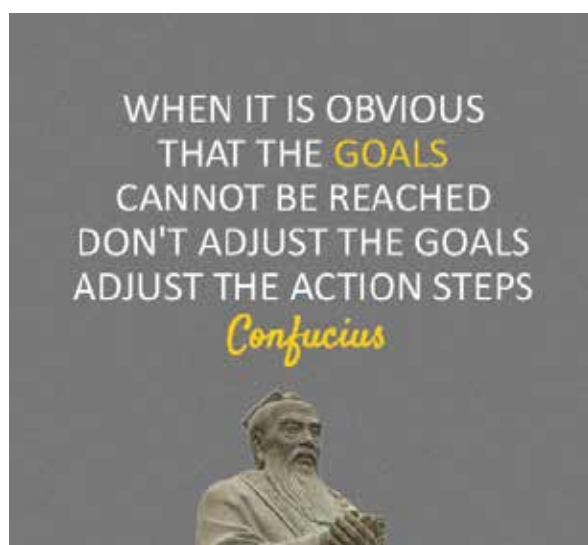
1: Reread at least one of these articles each week and ask yourself 'What did I find most useful in this article? And how could I use or adapt this PR strategy in my own business to improve my current level of results?'

2: Share a couple of the helpful PR ideas you've learned from this guide with your own business colleagues or friends. (You'll often find that when you explain something useful to someone else you tend to learn it even better yourself.)

3: Put at least one of these PR strategies into action each month.

And when you get a positive success we'd love to hear about it.

And on that note, here are a few of my favourite quotes on taking action...



I dislike going backwards and I'm passionate about progress.

One of my strongest beliefs is never go to bed the same person that you were when you woke up.

Learn something, do something, stretch yourself, you must GROW each day.

This is so important. Make DAILY PROGRESS a strong belief you hold.

But here's something that is crystal clear in my life.

Do you want to get to the next level in your life and business?

Here's how I do it.

You see, there's always a CONSTANT, there's always something that must happen before you can move to the next level.

Every time I do 'this', I move to another level in what I'm pursuing.

Your next level always starts by making a DECISION.

Usually, this decision is a bit scary as well.

Most people's best friend is indecision and that's why their growth is slow. As slow as turtles walking across Main Street.

You MUST start making more decisions. (read this again)

DECIDE today to start something new, do something that makes you a bit uncomfortable.

You should be doing AT LEAST 1 uncomfortable thing a day in your life or business.

Decide to MAKE YOUR MOVE.

Make a decision today and then do this. TAKE THE FIRST STEP.

That's it. Ask yourself this question:

What decision have I been putting off that if decided today could move my life and/or business forward?

Remember, you don't have to get it right; you just have to get it going.

By Mike Litman – Conversations with Millionaires