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Five Steps to Precision in Publicity

By Rusty Cawley

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PR flacks use a scattergun approach, hoping to hit something. They fax out press releases to long lists of reporters and editors. They make countless, fruitless phone calls. They pester and cajole and plead.

But PR Rainmakers reject such amateurism. Instead, they adopt the motto of the U.S. military sniper: "One shot, one kill."

You want to become so precise with your proposals that you inspire news stories that accomplish exactly what you and your client aim to accomplish.

There are five steps to bringing such precision to your publicity:

1. Pinpoint your objective.

This is often the hardest part of the process. It requires you to focus your client or your boss on exactly what it is they want from your news story. Boil your objective into a simple sentence, such as "We want our retailers to gain confidence in this new product" or "We want our vendors to complain to Congress."

Executives often rush through this process. Don't let them. Ask them: "If we don't know what we are aiming at, how do we know when we hit it?"

2. Identify your audience.

Knowing your objective allows you to choose the appropriate audience for your story. Generally for a business, audiences fall into seven categories: management, employees, customers, vendors, lenders, investors and regulators.

The appropriate audience is the one that can help you reach your objective. All other audiences are irrelevant for the purposes of this particular story.

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3. Design the message.

You must ask yourself, what is it we want the audience to do? Buy our product? Write their congressman? What? You want to design a message that will cause your audience to respond in the way that will help you reach your objective.

Again, boil your message down into one simple sentence. Avoid the temptation to hit more than one target. Focus, focus, focus.

4. Target the journalist or the media outlet that can best deliver you message to your audience.

The whole point of PR is to get your message to your audience through a credible third party. In this case, the third party is the news media. Forget the general press release.

Focus instead on proposals that aimed to convince one particular reporter to write one particular story. Figure out which reporter is the most influential with the audience you want to influence, then pour all your energy into devising a proposal that will appeal to that reporter or to that reporter's editor.

Study the reporter's past stories to discover that reporter's tendencies. Fit your story to the reporter's needs.

5. Create a proposal that hits the bull's eye.

Make your case in just one page. No nonsense. Get right to the point. Give the reporter at least three good reasons to do the story, each of which strongly appeals to the reporter's needs and tendencies.

Put your proposal in writing, send it by overnight delivery and then follow up in two days with a phone call. If the reporter says no, don't argue. If you missed, you missed. Time to reload. Listen carefully. Often the reporter will tell you how to hit the target next time.

Above all, don't get frustrated. Most story ideas end up in trash, no matter who comes up with them. Don't resort to the scattergun. That's for amateurs. Be a professional and learn to shoot with a PR rifle.

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3 Reasons to Tap into the Power of Publicity

By Jenna–Lyn Rounsaville Roman

Publicity is obtaining editorial coverage or features for your business. Publicity is getting your business reported as news. Examples of publicity are newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television interviews and Internet forums and much more. These are just a few reasons you should consider letting your business tap into the power of publicity.

Five Steps to Precision in Publicity

1. Effective - Publicity has been proven to be 10 times more effective than traditional advertising. Your customers believe what they read in the newspaper or watch on the TV news because humans by nature believe what is reported to them as news.

2. Affordable - Obtaining publicity can cost as little as \$0 dollars. Business owners can substitute a little time and imagination for money or hire publicity professionals, many of which have very affordable rates when compared to advertising.

3. 3rd Party Credibility - Having reporters write about your business in a news format gives your business 3rd party credibility that's extremely valuable. Anyone can sing their own business' praises, but getting respected people in the media to do it provides a type of credibility that ads and money just can't buy.

There are numerous other reasons to use publicity. Next time you are looking for a new way to get the word out about your business, consider tapping into the power of publicity.

Jenna Roman co-owns and operates JR Publicity, an Englewood, NJ-based public relations and marketing company with her husband, Josh Roman. For additional information, visit

3 Reasons to Tap into the Power of Publicity

Learn the five key steps to getting free publicity for your internet site and products

Web Site Promotion – Getting Publicity

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