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Generating Publicity with Letters to the Editor

By John Calder

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Publicity is a very different beast than advertising.

DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING

Dictionary.com defines Publicity as "Information that concerns a person, group, event, or product and that is disseminated through various media to attract public notice."

Dictionary.com also defines Advertising as "The activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, as by paid announcements in the print, broadcast, or electronic media."

While the two concepts seem very similar in nature, the real difference lies in the word "paid."

PUBLICITY IS NOT ALWAYS FREE

If certain resources need to be gathered together to launch a drive for publicity, then the publicity cannot be thought of as free.

In fact, some publicity stunts can be very expensive to plan and to pull off. Additionally, press releases can consume a lot of time or money to get them to the news sources that need to see them.

Constructing an effective press release often requires a writing specialist to construct it. Then press release distributions can run \$300 apiece if an experienced third-party vendor is contracted to get them delivered.

No matter the cost of effective publicity, the cost of the same amount of media attention generated by advertising will always be much, much greater.

WITH THE RIGHT ANGLE, YOUR PUBLICITY CAN COST EVEN LESS

Generating Publicity with Letters to the Editor

Joe Vitale has told the story about how the U.S. Parachute Association wanted to draw attention to one of their events. They had hired publicist Linda Credeur to help them to develop ideas to promote their upcoming event.

When Linda learned that the elder George Bush had been the only U.S. President to parachute from an airplane ---- in WWII ---- Linda thought it would be a great idea to "invite Bush to the convention, and to even give him an award."

Although George Bush generally gets \$50,000 an appearance, Linda was able to get Mr. Bush to attend the event for free. Joe said that the event was able to generate "wall-to-wall news coverage" with at least four camera crews in attendance for a week.

To read the full story, please visit Joe Vitale's site at:

<http://www.mrfire.com/0018.html>

LEARN TO SCALE YOUR PUBLICITY

Not all of us have the resources to pull off an event on the magnitude of the U.S. Parachute Association convention. Despite the fact that Mr. Bush attended and participated in the event for free --- Bush even made an additional jump on his 75th birthday two years later --- the convention still required the U.S. Parachute Association to corral a lot of resources to make their event successful.

Realistically, most of us do not need to generate publicity on the same scale as the parachuting convention. And even if we were able to generate that kind of coverage, we might not be prepared to handle all of the new interest in our business --- especially if we run a service business.

Two things kill more businesses than any other --- not enough operating capital to stay afloat, and more business than we can actually keep up with.

It is important to keep our publicity efforts to a level that is more consistent with our ability to keep up with the results of our efforts.

PRESS RELEASES

Press releases are designed to call attention to "a person, group, event, or product." However, for a press release to be effective, it must be constructed in a manner that makes the topic newsworthy.

Simply calling attention to the existence of a business is seldom effective in generating real publicity, unless your business has just opened --- and then the announcement only has merit at your local newspaper office.

Especially when you are attempting to generate attention in the local news media, it is important to take special care not to annoy your local newspaper reporters. These people can actually make you or keep you out of the paper completely.

Generating Publicity with Letters to the Editor

Even if you are attempting to distribute your press release at the national level, take care to make your press release interesting and newsworthy so that you may gain real advantage with your release.

GENERATING PUBLICITY ON A ZERO BUDGET

The most overlooked method of generating publicity for your business can be had with three simple lines of text:

Your Name
Your Business Name or Your Domain Name
Your City and State

All over the world, there are newspapers, magazines, online ezines and websites. Every single newspaper, magazine and online ezine generally accepts and publishes "Letters to the Editor."

In addition, webmasters are generally looking for solid testimonials that they can use on their websites.

Just think, if you were to take the time to read a few publications or visit a few websites and take the time to notify the publisher of your thoughts, you might just find your comments being published in all sorts of locations. You never know just where your next paying customer might come from, so take the time to get yourself quoted in these media outlets. You might just find more and more traffic and sales coming from places where you would never think to buy advertising.

John Calder is the owner/editor of The Ezine Dot Net. Subscribe Today and get real information YOU can use to help build your online business today! <http://www.TheEzine.Net>

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Smashing the Myth of the Press Release

By Bill Stoller

A musician spends years honing his craft. He writes world-class songs and performs them in a manner that moves his listeners to tears. He records a demo tape and sends it to record labels. He gets a contract and becomes rich, famous and adored.

The lesson: demo tapes are the secret of becoming a famous musician.

Wait, you say, the demo tape was just a tool, just his way of conveying his talent. It's his ability as a musician that got him the contract and made him famous.

Generating Publicity with Letters to the Editor

You're right, of course. He could have become just as famous if a record executive saw him in person, or heard about him from a friend, or as a result of a variety of other events.

Which brings us to the press release.

Somehow, the press release has taken on a magical reputation as the alpha and omega of publicity. Wanna become rich? Send out a press release. Wanna become famous? Press release. Wanna get on the cover of Newsweek? Press release.

Publicity "gurus" are springing up all over the Internet touting the press release as the answer to all marketing ills. Just knock out a release, mass e-mail it to journalists, sit back and wait for Oprah to call.

It's a cruel joke.

Here's the reality: the press release is no more important to your potential of scoring free publicity than the demo tape was to our musician friend. If he had no talent, if his songs sounded like garbage, the best recorded demo tape in the world wouldn't get him signed. Ditto for the publicity seeker. If you don't have a story to tell, your press release is utterly worthless.

I'm not knocking the press release — it's an important tool. But it's just that: a tool. It's not the first thing you need to think about when it comes time to seek publicity. In fact, it's one of the last. And it's not even absolutely necessary (I've gotten plenty of publicity with just a pitch letter, a quick e-mail or a phone call).

If you worship at the shrine of the press release, it's time to rearrange your priorities. Here, then, are the things that are MORE important than a press release in generating publicity:

A newsworthy story. This is the equivalent of our musician's talent. It's the very basis for your publicity efforts. Without it, your press release means nothing. To learn about how to develop a newsworthy story, take a look at

<http://www.publicityinsider.com/questions.asp>

and scroll down to "Is my

company/website/life really newsworthy?"

Learning to think like an editor. Oh, what an edge you'll have in scoring publicity over all those press release worshippers once you learn how to get inside the head of an editor. Give an editor what he wants in the way he wants it and you'll do great. I've got an entire article on the subject at

<http://www.publicityinsider.com/freesecret.asp>

Go there now and absorb it all. Trust me, it will make a

world of difference.

Relevance. Tie in with a news event, make yourself part of a trend, piggyback on a larger competitor's story, but, by all means, make your story part of a picture that's bigger than just your company. Stories that exist in a vacuum quickly run out of oxygen.

Persistence. Sending out a press release and waiting for results is lazy and ineffective. If you really believe in your story, and you believe that it's right for a particular media outlet, you need to fight to make it happen. Call or e-mail the editor to pitch your story BEFORE sending the release. If one editor says no, try somebody else. If they all say no, come back at them with a different story angle.

Getting publicity involves so much more than just sending out a press release. Treat it as seriously and with as much respect as our newly minted rock star treats his craft and you'll be well on your way to success.

Bill Stoller, the "Publicity Insider", has spent two decades as one of America's top publicists. Now, through his website, eZine and subscription newsletter, Free Publicity: The Newsletter for PR-Hungry Businesses

<http://www.PublicityInsider.com/freepub.asp>

he's sharing -- for the very first time -- his

secrets of scoring big publicity. For free articles, killer publicity tips and much, much more, visit Bill's exclusive new site:

<http://www.PublicityInsider.com>

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Smashing the Myth of the Press Release

Best Approach For Free Advertisement

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

3 Reasons to Tap into the Power of Publicity

"Expert Analysis:" Let The Media Attract New Customers For You -- For Free

20 Dreamweaver Templates

Clickbank Automation System

Clickbank Search Engine

30 Powerful Business eBooks

Build Your Own Mail Order Empire



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