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How To Get Local Media To Do Stories About Your Website

By George McKenzie

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Have you ever gotten one of those letters from your local property tax appraiser, informing you that your tax bill is going up about 20 percent?

I got one of those recently, so I took it to my friend Joe Gross. He appeals property tax assessments for a living.

"Man," he said. "I've never seen assessments explode like they have this year."

My "news antenna" shot up. Then when he showed me his new web site, which gave property owners a chance to look up appraisals of other homes in their neighborhood, I told him—"You've got to pitch this to the news media."

I helped Joe put together a short release and then faxed it to local radio and TV stations. A few nights later, there was Joe, on the evening news, describing his web site to tens of thousands of viewers.

Could it happen to you? You bet, if you remember a couple of basics.

*** Learn to spot opportunities. When you see, hear or read something in the media that relates to your field, call the reporter who did the story and offer 'another angle' or a 'follow-up.' Reporters are often judged on

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their ability to 'enterprise' their own stories and ideas, and if you help make THEIR job easier...guess what they're likely to do for YOU?

Recently the San Antonio Express News ran a story about some new software. Darrin Schroeder, VP of a San Antonio company that had just rolled out a similar product, called the reporter and offered a 'follow-up.' Result: front page story, with color picture, several days later.

See Joan Stewart's Special Report #5: "How to Identify

Story Ideas Within Your Company or Organization"
<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/publicityhound.html>

*** Don't be afraid to ask. Listening to a pitch is part of every reporter's job. But keep this in mind: they always work on deadline, so sometimes they don't have much time to talk. Therefore, if they seem to be in a hurry and they say "No," it doesn't necessarily mean your story is worthless. It may just mean "I don't have time to think about this right now." Call back another time.

See Joan Stewart's Special Report #25 "How to Pitch Reporters Over the Telephone and Make Every Second Count."
<http://www.get-free-publicity.com/publicityhound.html>

***Talk high touch more than high tech. A high tech feature is great...but only if it results in a high touch benefit that makes life simpler, easier, more enjoyable, or more interesting. Pitch how it saves time or money and cuts down aggravation. Humanize it as much as possible, and if you know of someone who legitimately loves and uses your site, offer them as a possible interviewee.

Getting free publicity isn't nearly as hard as you probably think. It will cost you some time and energy, but it doesn't have to cost you cash. You WILL get results if you keep trying, and the rewards will far outweigh the effort. Just ask Joe Gross.

To see a copy of the press release I used to spread the news about Joe's website, send a blank email to:
mailto:george2-32369@sendtheinfo.com

RELEASE RELEASE: Getting Your Press Release to the Media

By Meredith Pond

RELEASE RELEASE: Getting Your Press Release to the Media by Meredith Pond

Each day newspapers, TV, radio, and ezines hand out millions of dollars in FREE publicity. If you have a good story or good information to share, an editor somewhere will jump at the chance to use your material. Your name and ideas can be spread to thousands of people over night. And the cost to you? Zero.

Once you have finished your press release, here are some ways to send it to the media.

1. Start small. Think locally. Your best bet for getting media is right in your own home town. Editors and news directors love to do stories on businesses and individuals they can phone without placing a long distance call. In fact, when we send press releases to media across America, many editors say they ONLY do local stories.

Find the contact information for your local media in the Yellow Pages. Call the front desk and ask who handles stories like yours. You might even try pitching your story over the phone before you send your release.

2. Send your release to a trade publication that covers your industry. The fact that you have created a way for silver coated milk cans to dent less easily probably won't get a second look from your local daily newspaper, but the dairy trade publication might put you on the front page. Be sure to send them a photo, with YOU in the picture.

3. Email your release to media nationwide. Most editors won't go for your release, but since you are casting a wide net, some will give you coverage. You can get addresses of media folks who have asked to received releases by consulting one of the reliable media directories like the Bacon Publicity Checker or the Media Directory at Gebbie.com.

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Since email is a dirt cheap way to distribute a release, write a second release to send media next month. Sometimes you have to send three or four releases before you become familiar enough for an editor to jump on your story.

4. Look for neighborhood or alternative newspapers that cover

stories like yours. A policeman who had a story about abuse couldn't get his side covered by the local daily, but had a topic alternative newspapers loved.

5. Pay an email newsletter to run all or part of your press release. Ad rates are down around the Net and many fine publications will consider working with you if your release has good information their readers will appreciate. This same principle can apply to small newspapers and some broadcast organizations. You may get better results if you convert your release into an article or even into a long ad.

Above all, don't give up. Free publicity is...well...free. You only get results when you are organized and persistent.

Meredith Pond has written and distributed hundreds of pressreleases for everyone from individuals to big corporations. Seeher smart marketing ideas and publicity packages at<http://CheapWriting.com>
Reach her at<mailto:meredith@drnunley.com> or 801-328-9006.



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