

Making News is Better than Just 'Making the News'

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**Making News is Better than Just 'Making the News'**

**By Rusty Cawley**

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There is a major difference between making news and "making the news." It is the difference between a shotgun and a slingshot.

Amateurs can "make the news." They can entice a morning TV crew to take video of a charity event. Or land a mention in a local newspaper column. Or even score a feature story in a trade magazine.

But these are one-time shots that are unlikely to leave an impression on your target audience. Simply "making the news" will rarely attract a steady stream of prospects to your door.

Yet even top PR pros tend to focus on "making the news." There are two reasons for this. First, it's relatively easy to score. Second, the boss rarely understands that simply "making the news" is virtually worthless to the bottom line.

For example: Taco Bell "made the news" a few years ago by piggybacking on an international story. The space station SkyLab was losing its orbit and was about to crash through the earth's atmosphere. The world press was obsessed with the possibility that the debris might strike a major city.

Taco Bell hired a boat to tow a gigantic target out onto the Pacific Ocean. If any debris hit the target, Taco Bell told the world, every American would get a free taco.

The stunt gave the news media a strong visual to associate with the more abstract story of potential space debris. It also lent a lighter side to a completely out-of-whack media obsession.

Now, I'm not criticizing Taco Bell. This was a great one-time stunt. But in the end the news coverage did little to attract new customers to Taco Bell. There were no follow-up stories to tell. There was no exciting idea at the heart of the company's tactic.

It was a stunt. And a funny one. Nothing more.

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Taco Bell "made the news." But it didn't make news.

Here's another way of looking at it: "Making the news" is pure expense; making news will generate revenue.

The PR Rainmaker understands this crucial difference.

Sometimes "making the news" is all you can manage, given your time and resources.

But your primary goal should always be to make news. You accomplish this by helping to make your company, your product, your service or your idea so fascinating that reporters stand in line to write stories about you.

Example: Steve Jobs at Apple consistently makes news because his designs and concepts are so beyond that of his peers. His visionary ideas do not always translate into profits, but they almost always generate national news stories: the MacIntosh, the Newton, the iBook, the iMac, and now iTunes.

The lesson here is: If you want to make news, you must become "remarkable."

"Remarkable" is not something you bolt onto the company or paint onto your product. It should be the seed of your company's culture from Day One. If you lack this quality, then reinvent yourself. Find a remarkable product, service or idea around which you can grow a remarkable company.

This isn't as hopeless as it sounds.

Consider water. Who in their right mind, during the 1980s, would ever have predicted that bottled iced tea would inspire a marketing war in the 21st Century? Then came Snapple.

Consider off-road vehicles. Then came the Hummer.

Consider trading cards. Then came Pokemon.

Here's a note for aspiring CEOs everywhere: A team of topnotch PR Rainmakers should be at your side from the first day you begin to develop a new product. Why? Because they can help you build "remarkable" into your product.

The pattern today is for the designers and the marketers to create a product, then to call in the PR team to churn out media kits and press releases. News flash: That doesn't work any more.

Reporters are burned out on the flash of the New Economy. They want real stories that will pass muster with editors and with readers.

If you want to anyone to notice your company, you must make news. And that means you must hire a PR Rainmaker to help you install "remarkable" into your company, your culture and your product from

the start.

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## **Five Ways to Stay Positive in a Negative World**

**By Lucy MacDonald**

In view of the increasing negative events happening around the world here are five things you can do to help you stay positive.

1. Take a news sabbatical. Listening to the news can be downright depressing. All bad news all of the time can drag you down and keep you there. Give yourself permission to stop listening to the news, especially before bed time.
2. Use your influence to do good where you live. Shift your focus from what is happening in other parts of the world to your community. Get involved in making a positive change or contribution.
3. Focus on what is working in your life. Choose one thing that you are grateful for and focus on it for the rest of the day.
4. Express your appreciation to others. You can create a positive world one person at a time by saying thank you every chance you get to everyone you interact with - from the person who holds open a door for you to your child who does a chore to a cherished friend or loved one.
5. Focus on what you can change, let go of what you can't change. When faced with a distressing situation ask yourself if you can control over the events. If you do, change what you can. If you don't, learn to let it go and move on.

Lucy MacDonald, M.Ed., is the author of *Learn to be an Optimist*, filled with positive thinking, self-help ideas to develop a positive mental attitude so that you can live a happier, more successful life. Lucy is also the publisher of *Positive Perspectives*, a free monthly ezine designed to help you live, laugh, and learn.

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