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Public Relations—A Free Lunch?

By Claire Cunningham

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Seems like everyone is looking for the proverbial free lunch these days, particularly when it comes to marketing communications. Well, I hate to burst anyone's bubble, but there's no such thing. However, there are ways to stretch your budget and marketing public relations (PR) is one of them.

By **MARKETING PR** I mean publicity that is directed towards your marketing target audience and carries marketing messages. (It's not the same as investor or employee relations.) Marketing PR can generate inquiries, economically extend the reach of your advertising and direct mail programs, boost your company's credibility and enhance its standing as an expert.

There are three basic marketing PR tactics for you to consider:

NEWS RELEASES

Does your company bring new products or services to market? Improve existing products or services? Publish literature? These are all great subjects for news releases. Send releases to editors at relevant publications. One release a month is a good goal.

CASE HISTORIES

These can highlight your company's problem solving abilities. And well-written case histories are in demand — by readers and editors alike. You can work with a single publication to place a case history or broadcast it to many publications.

TECHNICAL FEATURES

Getting a technical article placed in the right publication can enhance credibility quickly. To be successful this tactic must be backed with careful research and planning to ensure the topic is timely. Usually you'll work with a single publication to place a feature.

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About the author

Claire Cunningham, president of Clairvoyant Communications, Inc., has 20+ years' experience developing and implementing successful marketing and communications programs. Sign up for Claire's monthly newsletter, Communiqué, at <http://www.clairvoyantcommunications.com> Claire can be reached at 763-479-3499 (Fax: 763-479-2809, e-mail: claire@claircomm.com)

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The Body of Public Relations

By Ana Ventura

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When broken down, public relations is really nothing more than a set of parts placed together to function as a whole, not unlike a living body. Each of these components performs a specified function, so that when combined with the other parts, the operation smoothly performs the task at hand.

Let's start off at the top. The head of your operation is the strategy you choose to use. This falls under the two options: targeted and non-targeted public relations. If you choose to target an audience, this means that you will be appealing to a specific group of people. Non-targeted public relations, on the other hand, mean that you choose to appeal to the masses.

Targeting your audience is usually the better way to go, because you already know that the people that will come into contact with your efforts have an interest in whatever it is you are marketing. This approach focuses on quality, not quantity, which can usually bring in more results than the mass non-targeted pr campaigns.

The arms of your pr consist of how you choose to get your information to people. Press releases, public speaking, self promotion articles, and media kits are a few of the ways that many Public relations specialists go about getting their company's name out there.

Of course, public relations need something solid to stand on, which is where integrating pr comes in. By reprinting or reusing articles and blurbs in your marketing that arose within your PR campaign, you are ensuring maximum exposure. You can also turn feature length articles into manuscripts and books about your topic. This will establish your credibility as an expert in your

field.

Finally, the heart of your public relations might be the most important bit of the PR body. Give your audience and offer. It doesn't matter how much free information you hand out, many people will not respond until they see an offer. Key components of your offer are clean, persuasive language, as well as keeping neutrality in the offer. This will give your customers a reason to come back to you.

Integrating all of the components of a great PR campaign is a surefire way to get your company's name acknowledged in your field.



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