

The Increasing Power Of Publicity – and how it can benefit your business.

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The call came into my office and the voice on the other end was very energetic, almost giddy: "I have finalized my marketing budget and need your help launching an advertising campaign for my new product," he breathed. "Congratulations," I replied, "but before we implement an ad campaign, I want to make sure you have explored potential PUBLICITY opportunities that could generate some cost-efficient media exposure first." Then, silence. "I never thought about that," he sighed. "Frankly, I don't know much about it."

He is not alone. It's a common conversation. Although many entrepreneurs or business people know a bit about publicity or media exposure, the majority of them simply don't understand the full benefits of "publicity placements" or how to go about generating them successfully. Publicity placements have always been a cost-efficient way to market a product/business and generate clients or customers, but because of lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of what publicity is and does, many entrepreneurs don't take full advantage of publicity opportunities — and that can lead to missed marketing chances.

I recently surveyed a few dozen business owners and entrepreneurs in some newsgroups and business chat rooms about their knowledge of "publicity placements" in the media. I found out that only 37% knew that a simple "product profile" in a magazine was generated as a result of publicity efforts. Most thought the company had paid the media outlet to run the feature, much like an ad. And of that 37%, less than half of them knew HOW to generate a similar placement.

Another interesting fact, because of the recent slowdown in the economy, expensive advertising budgets have been slashed. As a result, many businesses, like your competitors, are turning to publicity/PR campaigns as a more affordable means of marketing to compete with other companies. Here are some ways to use publicity placements to help your business:

Editorial Placements/Media Notification: What some entrepreneurs might not realize is that we see editorial placements from publicity efforts everyday in the media: product profiles, feature articles and

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contributed by–lined articles in magazines, newspapers, trade industry newsletters or on TV/radio/cable newscasts & shows. This is not advertising, this is "EDITORIAL Placement" or "Media Notification" of a product, business or industry expert. Notify the appropriate media that your newsworthy product is on the market or your business is offering a unique new service and let them run a feature placement that will spread that message to your consumer market. These placements can detail your product or business very effectively, giving consumers some objective, pertinent information that may well entice them to become future customers.

These editorial placements are looked upon much more credibly than ad placements. That is not a slam on advertising. Paying for advertising placements is indeed an effective way to market your product. But the fact is, a positive editorial placement such as a product profile in a magazine or a newspaper can be much more persuasive than a glossy, over–hyped advertisement – and a fraction of the cost. My point is that editorial placements are an often time overlooked marketing vehicle for a business, and that entrepreneurs should understand the full benefits of these placements to make the

most of their marketing efforts.

Editorial placements are a wonderfully reciprocal way for you and the media to work together for the betterment of your business. The media needs to fill its pages and airtime with interesting information — and you need to get the word out to your market. Research the media market to find those media outlets and editorial contacts with which you can forge that mutually beneficial relationship. But you have to do your part and do it right – or the media will forge that relationship with your competitor. Make sure your media message is solid, contains newsworthy angles and isn't disguised as overly commercialized ad copy. Have high–quality photos and media samples available and do all you can to make the media's job of featuring your product as simple as possible. It also helps to have some sort of clipping service in place to track your placements and get you copies so you can use them in your secondary marketing programs.

Expert Branding: This type of publicity placement generating takes advantage of the expert knowledge within a particular business. It is an effective tool for entrepreneurs whose businesses are more service related, like consultants or specialists. Expert branding basically treats the expert like a product. Alert the media as to your expertise on a specific topic and avail yourself to serve as an expert interview resource for future articles or news feature segments. Additionally, the expert should write a few brief articles on a specialized topic and make them available to editors for review and possible publication. The challenge of this type of publicity placement is the tedious task of finding out which outlets accept "expert editorial contributions" or contributed by–lined articles in their publications. Again, it comes down to meticulously researching your media market to find those media outlets that may be in need of the editorial content that you can provide them.

With some creativity, expert branding can be effective for product–based businesses as well. One client of mine runs a fresh wild salmon distribution business in the Pacific Northwest and was looking to increase consumer awareness of his products. Based on his more than 20 years of experience in the wild salmon harvesting business, we are expert branding him as a viable interview resource to health/food editors for features detailing the differences and benefits of wild salmon over farm–raised fish, as well as other related topics. In this case, my client (the expert) is identified and quoted in

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features and the name of the business and even a link to a website are often included for consumers to check out. This is great credibility building exposure at little or no cost.

Overall, when using the media to help market your product or business, take advantage of as many FREE media opportunities as you can. If you lack the expertise or time, a PR agency or publicist can generate the editorial placements for you. But the fee you pay them is a FRACTION of what it would cost you to buy similar sized ad placements. And those publicity placements typically lead to a much better consumer response right out of the gate – which is just what you need to boost your business to the next level.

Todd Brabender is the President of Spread The News Public Relations, Inc. His business specializes in generating media exposure and publicity for innovative products, businesses, experts and inventions.

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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.

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

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