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Turning your media pitch into a media hit

By Todd Brabender

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Anyone who has ever read a book on sales or taken a sales course has heard it – on average it takes anywhere from 3 to 10 contacts before a sale is reached. Although sales and publicity are very different animals, the same rule of thumb applies when pitching your release/story idea to the media. Because of the Internet and email, media outlets today are bombarded with hundreds if not thousands of media pitches each week. So, it's more important than ever that to make sure your release gets noticed. This doesn't mean pitching to more media outlets — it means your publicist or PR staff should take the time to pitch to your specific media market multiple times.

Whether you pitched the release yourself or hired someone to do it for you — did the release make contact? Sure it arrived, but is that the release that editor needs that day, for that article or for that issue. Hopefully so, but many times that is not the case. So the release is either saved for future use (again hopefully) or more than likely it is set aside, trashed or deleted. The releases/pitches that get used are the ones that are, in fact, newsworthy, media-friendly and arrive at opportune times. As you might imagine a perfect combination of all three translates into your best chances of media coverage and publicity.

Using a release distribution service gets your release pitched ONCE. But the most successful campaigns are those that are strategically and effectively maintained and/or re-pitched with calculated frequency. Most media outlets don't or can't respond to your initial release or pitch. Based on my professional experience as a PR/Publicity specialist, I would estimate that media placements occur in the following manner:

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25% occur after the 1st – 2nd pitch

50% occur after the 3rd – 5th pitch

25% occur after the 6th – 8th pitch

Sometimes (in fact most times) a strong placement happens when a release hits an editor at the right place at the right time. Sure you may have pitch that media contact three times over the last few weeks, but perhaps that reporter/editor/producer didn't have the time or the editorial space to work your release into a placement. Your opportunity for placements increases with meticulous, media follow-ups and re-pitches. What many business owners/entrepreneurs don't realize is the majority of media outlets fail to respond until after the third or fourth pitch. I continue to be amazed and amused at the editor/producer who, upon receiving my pitch for the fourth

time, says "I'm so glad you reminded me of this release!" or "Great timing! This will fit perfectly in a feature we're doing this week/month!" If the release had just been pitched once and not followed up, those placements would not have taken place.

So make sure your PR staff or the company you've hired isn't afraid to wind up and pitch your campaign multiple times. Just like in baseball, the more pitches there are – the better chances you get to make a hit.

Todd Brabender Spread The News Public Relations, Inc. Generating publicity & media exposure for innovative products/businesses/websites. (785) 842-8909 todd@spreadthenewspr.com <http://www.spreadthenewspr.com>

Generating Publicity: Will The Media Be Interested In My Product/Business?

By Todd Brabender

When it comes to launching a new business or product, some marketing consultants might say that EVERY product is appropriate for a publicity or media exposure campaign. That is true to a degree, but as a PR/publicity professional and former media person, I would qualify that statement by saying that although new products would benefit from a solid publicity campaign, not all businesses or products and their pitches will grab the attention of the media.

A number of strategically generated features or product mentions in magazines, newspapers and TV/radio/cable shows nationwide can lend strong credibility to a new product. That "media bullhorn" can also do wonders toward educating consumers about your product. But does your product — and its media pitch — have what it takes to attract the media into giving you coverage in their pages or on their airwaves? As I mentioned, many products or businesses can generate some type of publicity and media interest, but in my professional experience, the types of products and pitches that lend themselves to the best media exposure include: home/garden products kitchen/cooking/food

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products consumer electronics automotive accessories home repair/DIY tools personal health/medical/fitness products recreational/outdoor products experts (business, health, technology)

If you have a new or under-publicized product in one of these categories, the media could be a good friend to you. However, you first have to be a friend to the media. Your product (and pitch) needs to have what the media calls a "news peg" — that gives them a logical and newsworthy reason to feature YOUR product as opposed to the 200 other media pitches that are on their desks right now. Additionally, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to do your story or they WILL move onto a competitor's pitch and product that is easier to cover. Can you provide a media sample? Do you have quality photos of the product? How can the product be purchased: in stores, catalogs, online, by phone? Can you arrange a quick interview if needed?

Products/services that don't really lend themselves to media interest or publicity are things like: website developers cell phone/printer cartridge sales vitamin supplements insurance financial planning MLM/downline schemes

I'm not implying that these types of businesses aren't media worthy. I'm simply saying that from a media interest, editorial standpoint, there are thousands of competing product and businesses like these on the market and unless they are offering something truly unique, they lack that "news peg" that will attract the media's attention. If you are launching, let's say, a new garden tool that is very similar to many other garden tools on the market, don't expect much interest from the media in putting together a feature. You can create that news peg by answering a few questions: How does your product differ from competing products already on the market? Why should the media and subsequent consumers be interested in your product? Does it provide a solution to an existing problem for consumers?

Bottom line — an expertly maintained publicity campaign can help forge wonderfully reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships with the media. Reciprocal, in that the media constantly need interesting information to put together their product profiles and business features — and YOU need

constant media exposure to get the word out. If your product or business can meet the media standards mentioned above, you could benefit greatly from some solid nationwide media exposure. Getting your product mentioned in print articles and on TV/radio shows nationwide will help spread the word to customers — and at a fraction of the cost of a nationwide advertising campaign.

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. Free Publicity Consultations offered online:

(785) 842-8909

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