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How to Attract Customers With Media Publicity

Many Publicity Programs Do not Work

Publicity, often called “public relations,” is simply a method of delivering information to your audience through the media. This is usually accomplished through newspaper and magazine articles, where your contact person is the editor, and through interviews on radio and television, where your contact person is the producer.

Publicity is often represented as a means of gaining exposure, which it is, and an effective marketing tool, which by itself, it is not.

However, when used correctly, media publicity can be an effective and profitable way to attract new customers, multiply inquiries, increase referrals, deliver your marketing message, strengthen customer loyalty, emphasise competitive advantages, build your reputation as an authority, create a positive identity, increase your visibility, etc. The list seems endless.

9 Costly Misconceptions About Media Publicity

MISCONCEPTION 1: Media exposure will bring you new customers. This is often not the case. In most cases, the fact that you have been quoted in the media does nothing to attract customers. Exposure can establish credibility, but it will not attract new business unless (1) it explains your competitive advantages so prospects know how you differ from competitors, and (2) it causes you to interact with members of your target audience.

MISCONCEPTION 2: Publicity alone can be your entire marketing programme. This is where many businesses waste thousands of pounds each year. If you use publicity by itself, you are doomed to failure because publicity does not complete all the steps in the marketing process. However, when you build your publicity program on marketing principles, and use it in conjunction with other methods, it can play an important role in your marketing effort.

MISCONCEPTION 3: The key to publicity is the number of articles you can get into print. No. The key to publicity is how well the articles deliver your marketing message. You must start with a competent message that identifies why your prospects should hire you. If your message is incomplete or confusing, it makes no difference how many people receive it.



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MISCONCEPTION 4: If you know an editor, you will have a better chance of getting publicity. Generally this is not the case. Editors rarely go out on a limb even for their friends. Your ability to gain publicity depends almost exclusively on (1) the strength of your story idea or news release, and (2) whether your idea will interest the publication's readers.

MISCONCEPTION 5: You must pay for publicity. Again this is false. Articles and broadcast interviews are almost always free. Some small publications, to preserve their survival, have started to give preference for articles to companies who advertise with them. Fortunately, this practice is not widespread.

MISCONCEPTION 6: You get publicity only if you are a big advertiser. Again no. Many businesses have been featured in significant articles even though they have not advertised in those publications.

MISCONCEPTION 7: Editors rely only on well-known authorities. No. Editors look for sources they believe are reliable.

MISCONCEPTION 8: For best results you should call the editor on the telephone. No. Most editors do not like telephone calls because they interrupt work flow and interfere with deadlines. Many editors no longer answer their telephones and, instead, screen calls through voice mail. Well-written materials do not need added explanation.

8 Secrets of Successful News Releases

SECRET 1: Make sure your news release is timely. Ask yourself, "Why is this story important now?" When you have the urgency of a time deadline on your side, you dramatically increase your likelihood of success.

Your story can be timely eg it is breaking news, time of the year, because of an event, etc

SECRET 2: Make sure your news release is newsworthy. Here's how:

1. Use a credible authority on the subject involved. In most cases, this will be you.
2. Show a new or established trend by pointing out, for example, that something is becoming more popular.
3. Provide a new solution to an old problem.
4. Offer words of caution and explain how consumers or business owners can protect themselves.
5. Provide a different point of view for a subject already in the news.

SECRET 3: Make sure your news release is complete. How long should a news release be? Simple: long enough to tell your story. One page is too long if you do not have anything to say. Four pages are not enough if you leave out important facts.



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SECRET 4: Make sure that your news release contains helpful advice. You can do this in two ways: Offer the advice in the news release itself and offer to send more information by post. (Provide your telephone number and address at the end of the news release.) Many editors welcome your offer to post free information because you provide an added service to their readers.

SECRET 5: Explain how your story makes an impact on the local community. Most newspapers cover specific geographical areas. Your story should have a local connection to the people who live or work within those boundaries. An easy way to create a local angle is to offer a seminar or sponsor a special event in that city.

SECRET 6: Write about a subject already in the news. You can ride a news wave the same way a surfer rides an ocean wave. If you can help people understand fully something going on in their community, send a news release that offers your explanation and comments.

SECRET 7: Send well-written news releases frequently. Getting your story in print is a numbers game. Your news release might not meet the editor's needs today, but it might be perfect tomorrow. The more often you send timely and well-written news releases, the more likely you are to generate articles and interviews. I recommend you send news releases at least once each month.

Now, a few don'ts....

- Do not be discouraged if you do not get a response right away. Reporters must finish current projects before they work on yours. You may not hear anything for a few weeks.
- Do not be discouraged if no one ever calls. If your news release is written in AP style, it is already in final form. They may have no reason to call you unless they want further facts.
- Do not follow up by calling the editor. If you do not hear or see anything, let it go and send your next news release the following month on schedule. Editors at newspapers rarely take time to return calls.
- Do not be discouraged if you end up empty-handed. Golf players who hit the green in the fewest shots are those who keep trying. The key to their success is simple; they never stop trying.

OTHER FACT SHEETS IN PR & MEDIA SERIES ARE DETAILED BELOW
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DOWNLOAD

- Our pricing structure
- Dos and donts when dealing with journalists
- Checklist for choosing a PR agency or consultant