

How to Maximize Your Publicity

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Would you like for your company to get in the newspaper and not pay a dime? Then publicity is what you want to use! Publicity is FREE. There is no charge to have your press release printed. Imagine seeing your company in the newspaper and then think about how great you'll feel knowing you didn't spend a dime to do it!

Helping distinguish yourself from your competition to attract clients through your doors is a chief concern of every business. With so many marketing options available, sometimes the public relations aspect is overlooked. Public relations is the marketing function that creates publicity and goodwill within the community. It is done by educating the media about your business which, when done effectively, increases your credibility and visibility to attract new clients.

Publicity helps build more credibility than advertising. An article written about a business increases the importance of that business in the eye of the reader, as opposed to an ad. Publicity is a community service provided by news media free of charge to businesses, as opposed to paid advertising.

To create an effective public relations campaign you need to know what is newsworthy about your business. The next step is transferring that information into a media release and then delivering it to the appropriate media contacts in time for their publication deadlines.

There are eleven newsworthy angles that most businesses can benefit from. They are:

- ★ Launching new products or services
- ★ Offering a solution to a current hot topic
- ★ Staff promotions or expanding your staff
- ★ Community outreach
- ★ A grand opening, moving or closing
- ★ Celebrating your business anniversary
- ★ Receiving a new contract or customer
- ★ Reaching a milestone, such as the 10,000th customer served or 365 days of safety
- ★ Holding a seminar or conference
- ★ Serving in leadership capacities for non-profits
- ★ Giving or receiving an award

Be sure to write a media release when you have added to your staff. Include a head shot photo to accompany the release. This type of release is considered an “evergreen story” meaning since it is not tied to a specific date for an event it might take several weeks before they print it.

Community outreach is fundamental to a good public relations campaign. While requiring some planning, it does the most effective job of creating goodwill. Community outreach activities can range from holding a drive to collect food, clothing, blankets, or toys for a community charity, sponsoring a walk to raise funds for a charity, donating a portion of proceeds to a charity, or even

giving away services or products in celebration of a unique date. Be sure to allow enough time in planning the event that you can meet publication deadlines to maximize your publicity. That could be as long as three months out.

Awards are a wonderful way to let the community share in your successes, whether you are giving or receiving an award. Awards can be given to celebrate employee of the year, vendor of the year, employee volunteer of the year, etc. Including a photo of the award presentation is another plus for you. Be quick to nominate yourself for appropriate awards. Typically award programs run by chambers or other organizations do not get large responses, so your chances of winning are greater than you think! Additionally it is beneficial to apply simply to get your information in front of another set of eyes to raise their awareness of your business.

When writing the media release the idea is to concisely communicate the who, when, where, what, why and how much in preferably one page and not more than two pages. By providing the highlights the goal is to get the editors interest and if they have space they can do a feature story with an in-depth interview. Usually editors will use exactly what you send them, or extract a portion. Use your best grammar while avoiding industry jargon or undefined abbreviations.

A release usually comprises three paragraphs. The first paragraph summarizes the release. The second paragraph is your profound quote relating to the subject of the release. The third is the closing paragraph that identifies your uniqueness. It should always include contact information, whether you give a website, email or phone. Visit my blog to view recent press release samples at <http://maximizeyourpublicity.com/wordpress/category/press-releases/>. If you want more samples you can order my book "*How to Maximize Your Publicity*". It is a 52-page book that

features 18 sample releases using the 11 newsworthy angles. Visit <http://www.maximizeyourpublicity.com/order.htm> for more information.

Once you have determined what is newsworthy about your business and wrote the media release – who do you send it to? Who is it logical to send it to? If you are having an event to give back to the community send it to the community editor. If it is announcing your business anniversary, send it to the business editor. The key is to send it to as many reporters and editors that would be interested, even at the same publication. I once had an article appear in two sections of the same paper on the same day.

The media list is your tool for distributing your media releases. Creating a list is easily done. Begin with publications you receive at your home or office. Identify the correct contact person and their preferred method of contact. Usually email is the most efficient method to send the release. Visit the local library to select publications you may not receive. Refer to the *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media* for an extensive listing of every media contact in the world. When creating your list be sure to only select publications that would be interested in some angle of your story.

Add new contacts as you see new publications, establish new angles or hear of personnel changes. It is helpful when compiling the list to identify if the publication is daily, weekly or monthly and their corresponding deadlines. A release that is sent after a deadline is a release that is wasted.

One of the most common questions I am asked is “How frequently you can send a release?” As long as it is a release with a new angle, you can send it out weekly or even daily if you are so inclined. Sending the same release out multiple times is a huge no-no. It will simply irritate your media contacts, and that is something you definitely don’t want to do. A good strategy to keep your business in front of the media is to send monthly press releases.

Another common question is “What if they don’t print the release?” There are many reasons that releases are printed, including the axiom – if it bleeds it leads. It just depends what else is going on at the time of production. Don’t give up, just keep trying new angles.

A third question is about which type of media is preferred. Print is always better for longevity than a radio or TV spot as far as people holding on to the information for future use. Being on a show can provide you bragging rights and is very exciting indeed. When you are interviewed you will want to have a set of suggested questions for the interviewer. Be prepared for some other questions to come up out of nowhere. For TV, ask the producer what colors would be best for you to wear with regards to the set. For radio, make sure you are smiling and sitting up straight to have the best tone come through your voice.

In summary, to stand out from the competition, use publicity. It is the most economical way to get the word out about your business. After all, you can’t get any better price than FREE! Identify what is newsworthy about your business and create a publicity plan. Begin writing and distributing the releases to your media list. Be persistent with a goal of one new release per month. It will become easier to write releases and find news worthy angles as you develop your

skill. Keep your clippings so you can build your own wall of fame. I'll see you in the newspaper!



Self-promotion expert Julia-Isabel Davenport, MBA has 14 years public relations experience in corporate, non-profit and small business industries. Julia-Isabel equips business people by speaking to audiences, writing books, authoring articles for international trade journals, mentoring via telephone, hosting monthly Business Strategy Lunches™, recognizing deserving businesses with the Community Megastar Award™ and providing public relations services. She is a member of Meeting Professionals International, National Speakers Association and Toastmasters International. As the owner of Maximize Your Publicity, LLC, she teaches business people to effectively create their own publicity. She is the author of *“How to Maximize Your Publicity”*, *“2008 Publicity Planner”*, *“Creating a Blueprint for Success”* and *“Biblical Affirmations for a Successful Life”*. For more information on maximizing your publicity visit www.MaximizeYourPublicity.com or call (623) 572-8201. Visit her linked in profile at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/juliadavenport>.