

# Effective PR – 5 Tops Tips?

## How to get yourself noticed

You can gain valuable exposure from a well managed public relations campaign. Focused PR relies on building relationships with the media and making the most out of opportunities. Successful PR is about building a company's reputation and representing it in a positive light. This offers marketing benefits like increased brand recognition, increased numbers of leads and shorter sell in times because people already have some knowledge of your activities. PR creates a more receptive market environment. So how do you get the coverage you need?

### Plan your PR

Planning is essential. There's a temptation to just grab opportunities. This is OK, but you need an overall plan to set these in context...Set out clearly what your objectives are – is it to generate awareness of a new service, attract potential investors, create a higher profile than your competitors or raise your profile amongst potential clients/customers?

### Target your media

Who is it you want to reach? Take time to educate yourself about the media outlets you are targeting, this will give you an idea of the type of story you need to present to optimise your chances of coverage. Local, trade and national press all have very different news agendas and type of story. Local papers would be interested in a local business' success or new jobs available. Trade press would be interested in new services or products or issues related news.

Find out who it is on the publication you need to talk to, if its news it will be a news editor, if it's a feature it will be the features editor. There are a number of subscription print and web services that can keep you up-to-date on media contacts. They come out monthly or quarterly since media staff change quickly.

Pay attention to their deadlines and stick to them. It's not only about providing the right information; it's about supplying it at the right time. If a journalist wants a quote/information/photo by a particular date then ensure you keep to it, otherwise you run the risk of being overlooked in future.

### Understand the news agenda

You need to look outside the company for interesting stories. Scan the relevant media and see what they are writing about. Make a note of your target media's news agenda and link them to your own. Write a list of the top ten stories that appear in your target media and then a list of the top ten stories you have to offer and see where the overlap is. In this way your stories will be powerful, topical and relevant.

### Grab their attention

Editors receive hundreds of press releases every day, most of which end up in the bin. Ensure yours is the press release that gets read by making it newsworthy, relevant to their readers, timely (old news is no news) and written in a clear and concise way. Press releases should be written in a set format and it's fairly easy to find these on the web or in a book. By providing a journalist with newsworthy information in a timely manner in a format they are familiar with, using a communication vehicle of their choice, you are setting your company up for some well deserved coverage. Do this consistently and media will start coming to you for comments and stories, reducing your effort.

## Make the most of your PR opportunities

News stories are all about thinking laterally, news comes in many guises. Have you recruited a key member of staff? Opened new premises? Had a spectacular company record breaking month/year? A surge of new business? A success story with a well known client? A key company milestone such as the anniversary of the start of the company or a key sales mark?

If there is no news, then be creative. Do a customer survey and send interesting findings to the media. Identify a topical business issue (for example employment law, business regulations) and put forward a company spokesperson to provide insight into it. A 'Letter to Editor' of a magazine is an excellent way to generate some PR. One final point. We've used the word 'stories' throughout. This is not by chance. Media deal in stories, not product descriptions, features and benefits. You have to translate traditional marketing thinking into media thinking to be a success in this area.