



PR 101

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PR 101

Intro

What is free news coverage worth?

Creating visibility, credibility and traction, PR is a powerful tool.

Don't complicate it. Don't chase other shiny objects.

This book is a crash course on PR 101. Invest in a consistent PR plan and prosper.

Steven V. Dubin Bio

STEVEN V. DUBIN, president of PR WORKS, knows the "marketing" business. His newspaper career started by covering the Boston Celtics for the *New Bedford Standard Times*, Steve and Larry Bird shared rookie years. From there Steve progressed to editing and marketing positions in several publishing companies, including *Mariner Newspapers*.



He was a contributing author to *Get Slightly Famous*, a book about becoming a celebrity in your field and attracting more business with less effort and *Tricks of the Trade*, the complete guide to succeeding in the advice business.

He has presented seminars on various marketing topics for the Association of Franchisees and Dealers; Small Business Development Center, University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth; Metro South Chamber of Commerce; New England Healthcare Assembly; and South Shore Women's Business Network.

He understands that good marketing has to be a win-win. Content must be useful and interesting to an editor's primary audience. Free exposure is only available to those who recognize news angles, package news in a digestible form, and take care of all the details of story placement - from arranging interviews to providing appropriate visuals.

Steve is the past president of the New England Franchise Association, founding president of the South Shore Ad Club and founder member of My Pinnacle Network, a business-to-business lead generation group with eight groups throughout Massachusetts.

He resides in Plymouth, MA with his wife Wendy.

Direct Public Relations – Not just visibility. New clients.

PR Works has coined the phrase “Direct Public Relations”, a hybrid that utilizes the power and credibility of news media as part of an integrated direct marketing plan. Previously seen as largely an unquantifiable “image” tool, this new approach to PR is specifically designed to elicit immediate action and trackable response.

“Direct Public Relations” encourages your audiences to respond to free brochures, complimentary consultation or a free item so that the client can capture the name, address and telephone number of a new prospect. Additionally, the response mechanism -- ranging from a telephone number, fax number or e-mail -- will be coded so that response from specific PR exposures can be monitored.

Media Darling or Dolt?

Are you annoyed that your competitor always seems to be quoted in the press? Or regularly appears on TV and radio?

Hey, you've probably forgotten more about your profession than he/she knows now. Why does he get all the limelight?

Simple. Your competitor stays in touch with the press through a punchy cover letter (now it is a email intro), regularly updated press kit, new story ideas that connect to stories in the news, on-going news releases that keep you on their radar and an occasional phone call to pitch a topical idea.

It's not WHAT you know, but how well you package, get it to the right person and maintain that relationship.

Step one, the punchy email cover note alerts the editor why they should care, why their audience should care and how you can deliver the story on a silver platter for them.

Next, develop a press kit that includes a quick backgrounder on your company, your industry, a couple canned quotes and a handful of sources who can add insight and perspective - including an industry expert and a couple clients.

Additionally, draft three to six story ideas that would be of interest to your target audience. Something that is useful, entertaining or off-beat. Give each topic a snappy headline and a one-sentence summary.

Keep news releases coming at them - at least one to two each month. Topics don't have to be blockbusters. The focus could be a milestone (# of years in business, # of smiles generated), new product or service, key hire or promotion, new division, non-profit or community involvement, unusual customer scenario, human interest story, etc.

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Last but not least, call editors and very succinctly show the better side of a story that would be right for their audience. Give them a couple of ideas, let them provide feedback. Keep in touch as to how your profession connects to new and current stories in the news.

Want some help shaping yourself into a media darling? Our trainers are ready.

21 News Release Topics that Generate Press and Prospects.

From being kidded at the neighborhood barbecue to downloading new leads from your website, everyone loves the impact of being in the news.

News releases often garner major press coverage – both in traditional media and online. Most media websites have significant traffic and greatly enhance your SEO efforts.

To become relevant to the press, and an on-going authoritative source for topics on your field, you must continue to prod the press with regular news.

Here are a wide range of topics that tend to resonate with the press and the public:

- Anniversary (Round #s are the most impressive – 5, 10, etc.)
- Art Opening – (Encourage local artists to provide samples to adorn your walls. Upon art installment, hold an art opening for your clients and the artists.)
- Awards – (Create an award and encourage nominations. This not only establishes you at the pinnacle of your profession, but elicits community activity.)
- E-book – Announce (E-books don't have to be long or in print. They are good tools to establish credibility (he wrote the book on...) and generate leads. We can even write the book for you.)
- Holiday tie-in – (Father's Day is a great window of opportunity for Boot Camp For New Dads and other family-related stories.)
- Job creation – (The press and public LOVE job creation. From a new or expanded coffee shop to a major manufacturing plant, job creation will drive headlines.)
- Location – New (How does the customer find you? Don't forget to reference local landmarks.)
- Location remodel – (A facelift is worth noting.)

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- Major client win – (Worry not about your competitors hijacking your client. You keep them or lose them on the basis of how you treat them.)
- Off-beat Contest – (We’ve had success with the Ugliest Driveway and the Most Untanned.)
- Personnel – New key hire, promotion, additional training.
- Piggy-back – (Ride along a story in the news. The collapse of the Greek economy creates an opportunity for financial planning firms to prognosticate – within the bounds of compliance, of course.)
- Poll/Survey – (Perform a modest poll or survey at a tradeshow or among your customers. Announce the results as a “trend” for your industry.)
- PowerPoint Share – (Create a useful and objective PowerPoint and offer it free from your website. A visibility, image, traffic and lead builder.)
- Product – New (From new product line to a minor add on, this allows to the chance to provide an overview of all your products and services.)
- Product – Enhance. New nuance. (A new doohickey is enough to get some ink.)
- Recognition – (From a good Better Business Bureau rating to Chamber of Commerce accolades, take a bow for your good works.)
- Scholarship – (Establish a local scholarship tied to your business focus. Example – A medical office might offer a scholarship for a student pursuing a career in health care.)
- Seminars/Workshops – (This will garner business calendar coverage and build brand and leads even if attendance is light. Ask us about the “non-seminar” seminar.)
- Strategic Partners – (Announce and outline how it benefits your audience.)
- Tips – (From chiropractic “health” tips to accounting “tax” tips, keep it current, relevant and easy to digest.)

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Having trouble determining what is news and how to get your arms around it? Call today to brainstorm and we'll help you identify good opportunities and package them for the press.

Quote for consideration –

Good news is rare these days, and every glittering ounce of it should be cherished and hoarded and worshipped and fondled like a priceless diamond.

--Hunter S. Thompson

5 Phrases that Editors Hate

Many media gatekeepers are ALMOST human. Thus, they have buttons that when pushed make them crazy (crazier than usual).

The first time this was brought to my attention was when an editor of a medical trade journal commented that if I ever used the phrase “paradigm shift” in a news release again he would completely block my email address.

Fair enough. Paradigm shift is such a grandiose claim that it should be reserved for cures for cancer and amazing muffin recipes.

Similarly, these over-the-top phrases should also be avoided at all costs:

2. Cutting-edge

3. Bleeding edge

4. State-of-the-art

5. Best practices

Keeping it simple, communicating in a concise manner – now that would be a paradigm shift.

Let us know if we can help you with prose that your customers, prospects and other publics will love.

Quote for consideration –

"To simplify complications is the first essential of success."

--*George Earle Buckle*

An On-going Column Makes you the WINNER

Sure you've thought of being the proud author of an on-going column. You just know that being positioned as "the expert" would generate new business and galvanize existing ties. In effect, it would make you the "winner".

Getting a gig as an on-going column can be a daunting task. How do you go about it?

1. Select a reasonable schedule for the on-going column. It's more likely to be monthly than weekly.
2. Draft an entertaining cover note to entice media gatekeepers.
3. Draft three punchy sample columns. Focus on practical, objective information that your audience would find useful.
4. Avoid self-promotion or any hint of a sales pitch for your business.
5. Email a cover note and sample columns to the appropriate media gatekeepers. This may include the business editor of your local daily newspaper; the managing editor at a niche/trade publication; an online article site, etc.
6. Follow up via phone with media gatekeepers after five business days. Note – It often takes five calls to the same editor to reach resolution.
7. Win, lose or draw – continue to draft additional relevant columns. Well written pieces on relevant topics will resonate with the media at some time.

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Columns are worth the effort.

PR Works has helped numerous clients establish “the expert” position by developing on-going columns and relationships with targeted media outlets.

Let us know if we can help you obtain an on-going column and make you the WINNER.

The CEO as Spokesperson

From Frank Perdue to Orville Redenbacher to Steve Jobs, there is a long standing tradition of CEOs as the spokesperson for the company. And for good reason. It works.

Who better to reveal the passion, articulate the mission and shape the message> The media and the public want to hear from "the top" rather than a slick PR pro?

Now, let's be somewhat flexible. There are times when a "technical" question can be answered by an engineering manager or "legal" query handled by in-house counsel. But by and large, the media prefers to quote and question the leader, the CEO.

When possible, the CEO should be the "go to" source for authoritative comment. The CEO can help maintain a consistent message, offer a recognizable face to simplify branding and serve as a valuable resource for in-depth analysis of his/her niche.

To be an effective spokesperson, the CEO must be an integral part of the PR process. This does NOT mean that the CEO sets PR policy or strategy. It also does NOT mean that the CEO is active at the tactical level - he/she is not drafting news releases or pitching the media.

Rather, the CEO is encouraged to attend meetings with the PR agency or department. The CEO's thoughts are welcome and given top consideration. The intent is to keep the CEO involved and "in the loop".

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Similarly, the CEO should not be the marionette of his/her PR handlers. Advice from knowledgeable PR pros can be helpful, but heavily scripted responses or blatant ploys are to be avoided. Perhaps you remember when former Massachusetts Governor William Weld dove into the Charles River to prove its cleanliness. Not only did we cringe at the thought of splashing into that muck, but we sighed heavily at the transparent stunt. Weld was seen as a huckster rather than a credible source.

Here is a quick test to determine whether your CEO would make a good spokesperson:

1. Does your CEO have a keen interest in the public or industries' perception of your company?
2. Does your CEO taken an active role in the company's marketing efforts?
3. Is your CEO comfortable with public speaking?
4. Is your CEO articulate and thoughtful with his remarks?
5. Is your CEO likely to respond to interview and other media requests in a timely manner?
6. Does your CEO have a commanding understanding of your industry/niche?

The answer to all the above questions should be YES if you want to the utilize the CEO as your front man/woman. Keep in mind that many media skills can be taught and coached. How to prepare for interviews, how to make the most of an interview, how to emphasize only several major points and so on can be tutored to a willing subject. The biggest barrier is if the CEO is reluctant to be the public figure or is not a particularly verbal individual.

Quote to Consider:

"I want to put a ding in the universe."

~Steve Jobs

Get to the point. You just exceeded the average Internet attention span.

4 seconds. That is the attention span of the average Internet user in 2014. And the time span is going DOWN. (Source: ACM Transactions of the Web)

Then why is “But wait!” the message of many marketing campaigns?

Just one key message. That is the only option you have.

And you better make it provocative. What makes you different and better? How do you say that in 4 seconds?

Start with your juiciest benefit statement. “Stronger than dirt.” “Finger Lickin’ Good.” “When you care enough to send the best.” Do you remember these slogans?

Mark Twain noted, “*Writing short is a lot harder than long writing.*”

Oh yeah, Just Do It!

Quote for consideration -

"*Brevity is the soul of wit.*"

--*William Shakespeare*

Duck don't hide. Clear writing runs afoul.

When did we stop calling a duck a duck?

Reminds me of when our dating service client wanted to refer to themselves as a “relationship” consultant. Again, I'm lost. Are you therapists? Ancestry.com?

Call a duck a duck. Not “Waterfowl family Anatidae”.

Our attention span and interest levels are nanoseconds. Don't make me work too hard to determine what the heck you are talking about.

Example: I received this response from a prospect the other day.

“We provide consulting and research to companies to help them offer better overall experiences to their customers - a combination of product, service, marketing, and ops. We usually work with relationship-based products like software, banking, medical devices, telephones and so on. Products and services that require consistent performance overtime in all parts of the relationship. If you know of anyone who needs management consulting or research, please think of us. We offer custom projects, retainer-based support and training. “

What?

You had my eyes glazing over BEFORE the end of the first sentence.

Need help keeping it simple. Give a holler. Or jot a very brief note.

Quote for consideration –

"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

--*Leonardo DaVinci*

Conclusion

Not all PR firms are alike.

In brief, our PR and advertising firm approaches each situation as an open canvas.

We look at anything and everything that will help build your business – from the messaging of what makes you “different and better” to the full range of marketing tools including PR strategy, content management, web presence, speaking engagements, social media, the new versions of LinkedIn and Facebook advertising, E-newsletters, sales materials, Every Door Direct Mail, news coverage and positioning.

Serving small to mid-sized clients, we often act as a "quarterback" to generate "new business" on a consistent basis. We look at what tools are necessary to surround your best potential customers with positive messages.

Our clients seem to like the fact that:

1. Seasoned professionals work directly with them and on their account.
2. Our bandwidth of contacts rivals the big boys.
3. Our fees are reasonable.
4. We are almost human compared to our competition.

PR Works. Allow us to show you how it can work for you. Please let me know if you'd like to talk via phone or over a cup of coffee. No obligation, no stress.

Steven V. Dubin

President



Call us today!

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