

Making Press Releases Work - Creating News Where None Existed

By Diane Hughes

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Aren't you tired of hearing how extremely easy it is to get free publicity? Have you tried the suggestions that most public relations "gurus" give you? The hard, cold truth of the matter is that you cannot write a press release about any old aspect of your business and have it end up on the home page of the Fortune Small Business Web site. It just doesn't work that way. So how does it work, and what do you do if you need publicity but have nothing "newsworthy" to share?

There's another truth to publicity ... you can create it if you need to, and it's not that hard to do! Let me offer you useable suggestions that you can implement in order to gain some free exposure for your small business.

--- Offer A Donation to a Worthy Cause

One woman (a business coach) gave two scholarships to a local community college that catered to the underprivileged. She included two months of free business-building coaching services for qualified applicants at the school. She set forth the criteria with the help of the college, and decided on how to choose the scholarship winners.

Press releases were sent out, and the media went wild! Of course they would ... everyone loves to hear about people who are helping out the underdog. She received a lot of free promotion and boosted her image as a community leader, too.

--- Relate Your Product or Service to a Local or National News Event

Right now the United States is experiencing two very troubling problems that the media covers on a regular basis. The first is a drastic upswing in unemployment (especially in high-tech fields). The second is an energy crisis (particularly in California).

If your product or service can somehow offer a solution (even a small one) to one of these two dilemmas, you stand a great chance of getting some publicity.

Perhaps you own a resume service that has an exceptional rate of success for one reason or another. Phrase your release so that it helps to solve the unemployment crisis (and does not blatantly promote your business) and you'll perk up some journalist's ears.

--- Get In Line With Seasonal Events

The change in seasons always makes the news. In summertime, you'll find stories on safe vacation travel or the best airline deals. At the end of the year there is always coverage pertaining to New Year's Resolutions and how to keep them. Fall is generally a great time for gardening-type businesses to remind everyone to plant now so their yards will look fabulous come springtime.

If your company can offer some viable information pertaining to seasonal events, a press release might be in order. Writing a release outlining how your online travel agency always gives clients a "vacation safety" package that has proven to "save the day" in the past will bring out some interest in the local (and maybe national) media.

Above all, use your imagination. Pay attention to the newspapers, television news and magazines you come in contact with. Notice the types of stories they cover and then write a release that falls in line. You will soon be able to create news where none previously existed and gain some free exposure for yourself in the process!

Diane Hughes is an accomplished internet entrepreneur and editor of the popular ProBizTips Newsletter. You can learn more about Diane and her success in helping many start a home business and make money from home by clicking below:

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