

To Get Free Publicity From The Media, You MUST Learn The

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By George McKenzie

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Advertising or Publicity?

What's the difference? The average TV viewer, radio listener, or newspaper reader would probably say, "There isn't one. They're both the same thing."

But they're not. Not by a long way. And knowing the difference can put a lot of money in your pocket. Not knowing the difference can mean taking a lot out with little in return.

Here's an example:

Although I've spent most of my adult life in broadcasting, I've also been a restaurant owner. My wife and I owned and operated a chain of Subway Sandwich Shops for nearly ten years.

We were the first franchisees in South Texas to open a property inside a convenience store. Almost anything that's a "first" is likely to draw media attention. So I pitched the story to a reporter at the San Antonio Business Journal, telling him that "strategic alliances" between operations like Subway and Texaco were a growing trend (a trend is another automatic media attention-grabber) and the Business Journal could show itself to be out front by doing a feature.

About two weeks later, Dianne and I showed up on the front page of the Business Journal, with sandwiches in our hands and a huge Subway sign in the background.

It was great publicity because it was free. I calculated that if we had bought a similar amount of advertising (not free) space, it would have cost around eight thousand dollars.

This success story and others like it resulted from a single phone call to a reporter. It generated thousands of dollars worth of free publicity without a dime being spent on advertising.

And that's the difference between advertising and publicity. Anyone in the media will be happy to sell you advertising.

Publicity is free.

In other words, as one of my friends in the public relations business once told me,

"Advertising is what you pay for. Publicity is what you pray for."

Not only is publicity free, but it is also more believable than advertising. People believe a news story more readily than they believe an advertisement. Even if we had spent the eight thousand dollars I calculated the space in the San Antonio Business Journal would have cost for the story on our Subway franchise, we probably wouldn't have gotten the same response. Readers, viewers, and listeners skip over or tune out advertisements. They tend to give more credibility to something they read as a news story or hear as a human-interest story.

Advertising or publicity? While advertising is a necessity for many businesses, those who learn how to get free publicity will save thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of dollars and get their message across with added credibility.

George McKenzie is the author of "Going Public: 10 Ways To Use The Mass Media For Free Advertising, Internet Marketing And Website Promotion. <http://www.get-free-publicity.com>

He has almost thirty years experience in radio and TV. Subscribe to his free ezine, "Get Free Publicity," by sending a blank email to <mailto:george2-12375@sendtheinfo.com>

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