

# The PR Commitment to Small Business

By Robert A. Kelly

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We're birds of a feather, public relations and small business. Wonderfully compatible and a perfect fit. Usually makes it easy to commit resources to small business success.

But, sometimes I wonder about those small businesses that ignore the perceptions and behaviors of the key audiences with the most immediate impact on their businesses – the very people who hold the future of that small business in their hands!

To me, it's a matter of dollars and cents, even of survival!

So, what are we to make of small business failures? Especially one where it's obvious that enough well-placed publicity might have altered the behavior of sales prospects in a positive way allowing the business to prosper and avoid a Chapter Eleven filing?

What a waste!

Truth is, the folks who make up these key audiences, like the rest of us, act on THEIR perception of the facts before them. If a small business overlooks this crucial reality, and fails to prepare by monitoring how these people view it, who is to blame if misconceptions flower leading inevitably to negative behaviors?

Of course, the small business itself.

The title of this article speaks of a commitment to small business. While I believe that public relations is indispensable to small business success, our commitment must be conditional.

Here's why.

We are committed to your small business, and will help you every step of the way:

IF you take the time to meet with members of your key audiences and evaluate their feelings and beliefs about you;

IF you are committed to move into action when you discover troubling perceptions;

IF you accept that what people BELIEVE to be true, versus the truth, defines your public relations problem;

IF you are willing to raise your profile by regularly speaking before business and fraternal clubs, by meeting with the media, and by promoting your business as appropriate, thus building the kind of good will you will need should things go awry.

IF you prepare carefully written, persuasive messages that directly address the misconceptions you discover during your fact finding;

IF you select effective communications tactics that will carry your messages to those key audiences in a timely manner. Tactics such as meetings, speeches, luncheons, facility tours, promotional events, emails, media interviews and many more.

And IF you track your progress by speaking regularly with members of those key audiences, and monitoring both the media and the reaction of community residents and other businesses, adjusting your strategy and tactics accordingly.

A lot to ask in return for our commitment to a small business? Perhaps, but without such a commitment in return, a positive result is unlikely.

Public relations and small business ARE wonderfully compatible and a very good fit.

That's why my commitment remains on the table.

end

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