

Smashing The Myth of the Press Release

By Bill Stoller

Smashing The Myth of the Press Release

Bill Stoller
bill@publicityinsider.com

Bill Stoller's Publicity Insider <http://www.publicityinsider.com>

by Bill Stoller
Founder, PublicityInsider.com

A musician spends years honing his craft. He writes world-class songs and performs them in a manner that moves his listeners to tears. He records a demo tape and sends it to record labels. He gets a contract and becomes rich, famous and adored.

The lesson: demo tapes are the secret of becoming a famous musician.

Wait, you say, the demo tape was just a tool, just his way of conveying his talent. It's his ability as a musician that got him the contract and made him famous.

You're right, of course. He could have become just as famous if a record executive saw him in person, or heard about him from a friend, or as a result of a variety of other events.

Which brings us to the press release.

Somehow, the press release has taken on a magical reputation as the alpha and omega of publicity. Wanna become rich? Send out a press release. Wanna become famous? Press release. Wanna get on the cover of Newsweek? Press release.

Publicity "gurus" are springing up all over the Internet touting the press release as the answer to all marketing ills. Just knock out a release, mass e-mail it to journalists, sit back and wait for Oprah to call.

It's a cruel joke.

Here's the reality: the press release is no more important to your potential of scoring free publicity than the demo tape was to our musician friend. If he had no talent, if his songs sounded like garbage, the best recorded demo tape in the world wouldn't get him signed. Ditto for the publicity seeker. If you don't have a story to tell, your press release is utterly worthless.

I'm not knocking the press release -- it's an important tool. But it's just that: a tool. It's not the first thing you need to think about when it comes time to seek publicity. In fact, it's one of the last. And it's not even absolutely necessary (I've gotten plenty of publicity with just a pitch letter, a quick e-mail or a phone call).

If you worship at the shrine of the press release, it's time to rearrange your priorities. Here, then, are the things that are MORE important than a press release in generating publicity:

1. A newsworthy story. This is the equivalent of our musician's talent. It's the very basis for your publicity efforts. Without it, your press release means nothing. To learn about how to develop a newsworthy story, take a look at <http://publicityinsider.com/questions.asp> and scroll down to "Is my company/website/life really newsworthy?"

2. Learning to think like an editor. Oh, what an edge you'll have in scoring publicity over all those press release worshippers once you learn how to get inside the head of an editor. Give an editor what he wants in the way he wants it and you'll do great. I've got an entire article on the subject at <http://publicityinsider.com/freeseecret.asp> Go there now and absorb it all. Trust me, it will make a world of difference.

3. Relevance. Tie in with a news event, make yourself part of a trend, piggyback on a larger competitor's story, but, by all means, make your story part of a picture that's bigger than just your company. Stories that exist in a vacuum quickly run out of oxygen.

4. Persistence. Sending out a press release and waiting for results is lazy and ineffective. If you really believe in your

story, and you believe that it's right for a particular media outlet, you need to fight to make it happen. Call or e-mail the editor to pitch your story BEFORE sending the release. If one editor says no, try somebody else. If they all say no, come back at them with a different story angle.

Getting publicity involves so much more than just sending out a press release. Treat it as seriously and with as much respect as our newly minted rock star treats his craft and you'll be well on your way to success.

#

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Bill Stoller is the founder and publisher of Free Publicity, The Newsletter For PR Hungry Businesses. A twenty year public relations veteran, Bill teaches entrepreneurs and small businesses how to achieve maximum publicity with minimal investment. For free articles, tips and insider secrets about getting publicity, visit Bill's home on the web at <http://www.publicityinsider.com>

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)