

Generating Publicity For Your Business: Knowing Your "Media Market" Is Critical.

By Todd Brabender

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When starting a successful business venture or launching a new product, most entrepreneurs or business owners conduct some type of marketing research to determine the extent of their prospective customer base. And when getting the word out to that customer base, many entrepreneurs may turn to the media to help generate a buzz for them. However, as detailed as their marketing research might have been, very few business owners are as meticulous at determining their proper "media market" - that is, all those media outlets whose editorial profiles are a match to a product/business profile and would be appropriate for generating media exposure and publicity.

One of my favorite things to do is educate my clients about their "media market." Consider this, in North America there are more than 75,000 media outlets and almost one million reporters, editors & producers in the entire media market. However, only a small percentage of those may be appropriate and applicable to your business/product. But which ones? Unfortunately, too many well-intentioned entrepreneurs are either uninformed or misinformed regarding what it takes to attract media attention for their business. I recently surveyed 100 business owners and entrepreneurs who contacted my business about a publicity/media exposure campaign. Here's what I found:

- 11% - "Are Admittedly Media Market Clueless"
- 19% - "Have Unrealistic Media Market Perceptions"
- 29% - "Think Local & Large Media Are The ONLY Media"
- 41% - "Have A Good Grasp On Their Potential Media Market And Its Benefits"

Here are the descriptions of these categories and the lessons I try to teach those who fall into each category:

11% - "Are Admittedly Media Market Clueless"
These are the business owners who know their product and market inside and out, BUT they have never thought about launching a publicity/media exposure campaign before now. They know very

little about their potential media market or how to generate publicity therein.

The Lesson: For these types of business owners I recommend asking for help from a smaller PR agency or publicity specialist who is willing to "hand hold" to get the client educated. Research to find one who doesn't mind spending the time to educate you about what should be included in your specific media market and the pitch. Make sure the agency or publicist understands the product/business as well as you do and can in turn educate you about your media market - one that will be able to benefit your business for years to come.

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19% - "Have Unrealistic Media Perceptions"

These are the business owners who are CONVINCED that EVERY newspaper, consumer interest magazine and TV show will run a feature on their new products when they launch a publicity campaign.

The Lesson: No product or business, no matter how big or great can be assured media coverage in every outlet in a media market. But you can get coverage in a good number of them given the right media tending. Every media pitch will be weighed against the media outlet's editorial lead-time, its available editorial space, and availability of an editorial staff member to cover your pitch. It is totally up to the discretion of each media outlet as to whether your pitch makes it to the pages or on air. It can be an uphill battle if you target the wrong media with the wrong message. But you can greatly increase the chances generating those media placements with a little expertise and media market know-how.

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29% - "Think Local & Large Media Are The ONLY Media"

These are the ones who think of their media market in two simple terms: LOCAL & LARGE LOCAL, as you might imagine, means the media outlets in their city or surrounding geographic region -- the local newspaper, a regional business magazine or two, a few shows at local radio/TV stations. LARGE, on the other hand, are media outlets like The Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, Good Morning America, Oprah or your other favorite large circulation, trade specific media outlet.

The Lesson: The reality is local and large are indeed part of your media market, but not the only ones. The best media market opportunities may well be the dozens of other smaller scale papers, magazines, newsletters or TV/radio/cable shows that may generate more customer interest and sales than a placement in the big media might. Because of a lack of media market knowledge, many business owners don't even know these smaller, more targeted media outlets exist. This is where a PR agency or publicity specialist can be integral in your publicity campaign. They know the media market very well and will be able to find those media members who will be the best for generating editorial features on your business or product. They also have great media contacts that can turn one feature into a syndicated story that runs in multiple media outlets nationwide.

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41% - "Have A Good Grasp On Their Potential Media Market And Its Benefits"

These are media-savvy entrepreneurs and business owners who are realistic and knowledgeable about how the media can benefit their business. They know that they have to narrowcast their media pitch to a select segment of the media in order to get coverage that will increase exposure for the business.

The Lesson: Don't let a PR agency or publicity specialist tell you they will send your pitch to 20,000,

30,000 or 50,000 media outlets. The reality is, of the 8,000 daily & weekly newspapers, 11,000 magazines & newsletters, 15,000 radio/TV/cable stations and 7,000 Internet news sites in North America, only about 25% of those accept press releases from outside their geographic area. They cover only LOCAL issues, businesses and products, and it is a waste of time to target them. The key is researching to discover which media outlets will be receptive to your pitch and knowing how to parlay those media contacts into positive consumer interest features that will educate and entice customers about your product or business.

Just like marketing to find the right customers, one should be equally diligent about finding and pitching the right media market. Bottom line - whether you have a general interest product that has widespread consumer appeal or a trade specific business with a very narrow customer base, knowing your appropriate media market can mean the difference between product/business publicity or product/business obscurity.

Todd Brabender is the President of Spread The News Public Relations, Inc. His business specializes in generating media exposure and publicity for innovative products, businesses, experts and inventions.

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