

DO IT YOURSELF PR AND PUBLICITY E-KIT

BY PHILIPPA LOWE



Put yourself up in lights



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About the Author

Philippa Lowe is Chief Ideas Officer (CIO) of Public Relations Agency Just Go Write. Holding a Masters in Communication and over fifteen years radio, TV, and print media experience in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, she has an unerring sense of news.

Combined with her extensive planning and management experience - head of a PR agency, award-winning documentary maker and magazine editor - she's passionate about the power of integrated communications within a business.

Phil's journey into PR coaching began naturally, working with small business groups on publicity training and teaching journalism to undergraduates keen to get their break in a newsroom. Working with her full service agency clients - including Fuji Xerox and Adobe - to achieve great publicity successes, she wanted to offer similar resources to small business operators. Her PR, publicity and success training products are designed to empower solo-entrepreneurs and SMEs to publicise themselves and dramatically increase their incomes.

Phil grew up in the UK, and travelled to Australia in her twenties on a business scholarship to study her MA. There she met her husband, Tony, who persuaded her that East Coast Australian beaches had more colour and sun than Birmingham, England.

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Hi, I'm Philippa Lowe. Thank you for buying my Do-It-Yourself Public Relations e-Kit.

I bet you're wondering why, as Chief Ideas Officer (CIO) of a full service public relations agency, I'd want to write a DIY Kit about something our clients pay us to do everyday? Well, I get loads of calls and e-mails from solopreneurs and SMEs saying they want to grow their businesses. And since I really love working with small businesses, I wanted to create resources for those people who needed to do their own public relations campaigns.

So I launched Publicity Express, with a range of programs, products and services designed specifically to empower you to tell your story through great PR and generate sales.

My background is in journalism: I worked in the BBC in the UK, plus the ABC, and was awarded the Radio National Prize for my radio work in Australia. I've also lectured in journalism and PR at Australia's leading journalism school: Charles Sturt University. After working in journalism for a decade, I opened my PR agency in 1999. Offering my insider secrets to working with the media and teaching businesses how to be newsworthy, I built a high six-figure agency in six quick (and busy!) months. I've received some really poor PR pitches from so-called PR professionals wanting to generate publicity for their clients. I reckon it places me in an expert position to tell you the dos and don'ts of dealing with the media and to show you some awesome ways of writing media pitches that get you noticed.

But, no matter how much you'd love column inches in the national press on your new book, or to get your own radio spot, you also need to remember that PR does not stand for press release, it stands for public relations! It's the art of connecting to the individual, or relating to each person your business communicates with as if you were having a one-on-one conversation with them - and really care about the intricacies of their lives. They are not a general public with a big ol' "P" on their forehead anymore, that's old school.

Those individuals can be a consumer, a business partner, a government official or other 'stakeholder'...but the key is knowing the concerns, likes, dislikes, what keeps them up at night, what gets them fascinated, etc. when communicating.

This DIY PR Kit gives you a step-by-step, easy way to conduct your own public relations campaign, and get closer to your customers. Are you ready? Let's get started, and remember, most importantly...

Put Yourself Up In Lights!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil".

CHAPTER ONE What is public relations?

Do you know, when I first moved from journalism into PR, I refused to put “PR Consultant” on my business card? My old editor told me “I’d gone to the dark side”. PR has had negative connotations for so long that often we’re lumped in with those lovely lawyer jokes :). But over the years I’ve been running a PR agency, I’ve come to love the intricacies of PR in the marketing mix. And now, quite ironic considering my expert background in media relations, I’m the first one to get on my soapbox when others treat PR just as a press release machine.

So what is public relations? This kit covers public relations and publicity, but as both can be confused with advertising, let’s first explore the differences.

Advertising - a specific message about your business, product or service and paying for it to be placed in specific media (magazines, newspapers, television, radio etc.). You have control over the advert.

Public Relations - planning, developing, putting into place and evaluating information and communication strategies that present your business to the public, your clients and other stakeholders. Sounds highbrow? Put simply, it’s becoming recognised, positively, for what you do. Examples of successful public relations include speaking at events, writing a guest column, being sought for expert opinion.

Publicity is one aspect of Public Relations, and probably what most people think of when they seek ‘PR’ for their organisation. Publicity refers to getting coverage about your organisation, product or service in the media without having to pay for it. It is different to advertising as you have no control over the end result, namely the story that appears in the media.

Why PR is important

PR increases your credibility - when people read about you, or hear you speak at a conference, for example, it gives you greater credibility.

PR makes sales easier - the more people hear about you and your business, the more qualified prospects you’ll attract. It also *removes price objections* - if they have sought you out as the best, they’re less likely to quibble over money.

PR makes you look ‘*bigger*’, enabling you to compete more effectively.

PR can be *cost-effective* compared to other marketing tactics such as advertising and direct mail

CHAPTER TWO

What's so special about you?

Although part of the marketing mix, PR is still about selling yourself, your product or service. As a journalist, I always ask what's newsworthy about an organisation's story. As a PR consultant, I want to find out what's exciting about my client. In marketing, this is often referred to as a 'Unique Selling Proposition' or USP. Your USP is vital because it's the foundation upon which all the marketing messages for your business stand. Having a USP will dramatically improve the positioning and marketability of your company and products by accomplishing 3 things for you:

1. Unique - It clearly sets you apart from your competition, positioning you the more logical choice.
2. Selling - It persuades another to exchange money for a product or service.
3. Proposition - It is a proposal or offer suggested for acceptance.

Below are some powerful USPs that alleviate the "pain" experienced by the consumers in their industries.

Example #1 - Package Shipping Industry

Pain - I have to get this package delivered quickly!

USP - "When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight." (Federal Express)

Example #2 - Food Industry

Pain - The kids are starving, but Mom and Dad are too tired to cook!

USP - "Pizza delivered in 30 minutes or it's free." (Dominos Pizza)

Use the following steps to create your own USP

Step 1: Use Your Biggest Benefits:

Clearly describe the 3 biggest benefits of owning your product or service. Your prospect doesn't care if you offer the best quality, service, or price. You have to explain exactly WHY that is important to them. Think in terms of what your business does for your customer and the end-result they desire from a product or service like yours. So, what are the 3 biggest benefits you offer?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Step 2: Be Unique:

Basically, your USP separates you from the competition, sets up a "buying criteria" that illustrates your company is the most logical choice, and makes your product or service the "must have" over your competition. Write your USP so it creates desire and urgency. Your USP can be stated in your product itself, in your offer, or in your guarantee:

PRODUCT: "A unique golf swing that will instantly force you to hit like a pro."

OFFER: "You can learn this simple technique that makes you hit like a pro in just 10 minutes of golf practice."

GUARANTEE: "If you don't hit like Tiger Woods the first time you use this new swing, we'll refund your money."

Step 3: Solve An Industry "Pain Point"

Identify which needs are going unfulfilled within either your industry or your local market. So, what are the most frustrating things your customer experiences when working with you or your industry in general? Alleviate that "PAIN" in your USP and make sure you deliver on your promises. Write your ideas now...

Step 4: Be Specific And Offer Proof:

Consumers are sceptical of advertising claims companies make. So alleviate their scepticism by being specific and offering proof when possible. Write your ideas now...

Step 5: Condense Into One Clear And Concise Sentence:

The most powerful USPs are so perfectly written, you cannot change or move even a single word. After you get your USP written, your PR, advertising and marketing copy will practically write itself!

Now take all the details about your product/service/offer from the steps above and sculpt them into one clear and concise sentence with compelling salesmanship fused into every single word.

Step 6: Integrate Your USP Into ALL Marketing Materials:

In the DIY PR Kit I'm gong to focus upon using your USP across all your PR and publicity. Variations of your USP also need to be included in ALL your marketing materials such as your advertising and sales copy headlines; Business cards, brochures,

flyers, & signs; Your "elevator pitch", phone, and sales scripts; Letterhead, letters, & postcards; Website & Internet marketing.

Step 7: Deliver On Your USP's Promise

Be bold when developing your USP but be careful to ensure that you can deliver. Your USP should have promises and guarantees that capture your audience's attention and compels them to respond to you. Having a strong USP can make your business a big success, or a big failure if you don't deliver on it. In the beginning, it was a challenge for Federal Express to absolutely, positively deliver overnight, but they developed the system that allowed them to deliver the promise consistently.

CHAPTER THREE Creating your PR Plan

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail”

Benjamin Franklin

I know you'd much rather be out there pitching for radio spots and getting your news in the paper, but it's vitally important to plan your PR at the start. I love the above quote by Benjamin Franklin. Planning keeps you on target and on purpose. It sets you up for success.

Preparing to write your PR plan.

Before you start writing your plan, ask yourself the following questions.

- What is my budget?
- What are the goals I'd like to achieve?
- Who is my target market?
- Who/what are my primary referral sources?
- How will this fit in with my other marketing activities?
- How will I measure my success?

What's my budget?

I recommend a marketing budget be 2-10% of projected annual gross sales, and usually suggest a minimum of 5%.

If your annual sales are \$100,000, and you decide to reinvest 10% of your sales into marketing, you have \$10,000 per year to spend on marketing. You could decide to spend some of that on advertising, direct mail or public relations.

Your PR budget, depending on the activities included in the plan, may need to cover photography, postage, event costs and outsourcing specialist PR activities.

What are the marketing goals I'd like to achieve?

By setting marketing goals for your PR plan, you are able to readily measure its success. Typical goals include

- Increase contact database by 25 names each month
- Launch a new product
- Change a perception in the marketplace

Remember, the definition of marketing is everything you do to reach and persuade prospects. The sales process focus is everything you do to close the sale.

Who is my target market?

Who are the people you are trying to persuade? Try and go into as much detail as possible. What age are they? What income level are they? Look at what struggles they currently face; the type of person they are; what are they excited about; why do they need to work with you; what do they think For

example, if you've a new baby food you want to market, you would define your target market as carers, whose children are aged between five and 12 months old. If you plan on solely selling that food online, you'd also need to add the definition "with internet access".

Who/what are my primary referral sources?

Referral sources are the lifeblood of your business. Whether they are current clients or colleagues in complementary businesses, you must make sure you are initiating P.R. activities to constantly remind those sources about you - so they can refer more prospects to you.

How will this fit in with my other marketing activities?

Depending on your industry, you may choose other marketing activities to supplement your PR, such as advertising and direct mail.

How will I measure my success?

This is crucial - and pretty easy. Go back to your goals and record each month how you're tracking overall. This can be in a word document, excel spreadsheet, or in your marketing database if you have one. If your goals are specific - such as increase your database by 25 names each month - you can measure quite easily. If your goals include building a brand or changing a perception in the marketplace, then you conduct surveys.

Now use the following templates to set up your PR Plan.

CREATING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

Before you start writing your plan, answer the following questions:

Annual Marketing Budget _____

Business Goals I'd like to achieve with this plan _____

Target Market _____

Referral sources: _____

Other marketing activities planned _____

How will I measure success? _____

CREATING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

Possible Public Relations techniques you can use

Tactics	Notes
Speaking	What topics can you speak on? What groups that include your target market and referral sources would be interested in them?
Website	What changes can you make to your Web site to make it more appealing to your target market and referral sources?
Awards	What awards could you apply for? Would these awards make you more credible to your target market and referral sources?
Celebrity	Do any celebrities (sports, entertainment, well-known business people) currently use your products or services? Would an endorsement from them appeal to your target market and referral sources? Can you barter products and services, or pay them out of your budget? If you don't have a celebrity client, what celebrity would appeal to your target market and referral sources? Can you afford to hire that person?
Seminars/Workshops	What types of seminars and workshops might be of interest to your target market and referral sources?
Special Events	What types of Special Events (fundraisers, grand openings, parties, contests, sponsorships) would appeal to your target market and referral sources?
Articles in the media	What article topics and publications would be of interest to and read by your target market and referral sources?
Radio	What radio show in your area of expertise would help you better reach your target market and referral sources?
Community Involvement	What charities are you interested in helping? Would helping those charities allow you to appeal to and/or have access to your target market and referral sources?
Book	What topics could you write a book on? Would these book topics help you get more credibility, publicity, speaking gigs, sales, referrals, meet your business goals?
Other online PR	Would a blog, online article submissions and press releases help you better reach your target market and referral sources?
Newsletter	Would a newsletter help you better reach and stay in contact with your target market and referral sources?
Publicity	What story angles (including those from your other P.R. tactics) might be of interest to your target market and referral sources? What times of the year would those angles be of interest to the media?
Other	Tie in to a national day etc

CREATING YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

Fill out your own tactics based on the questions above. You may not necessarily cover every tactic, but it's a great way to get you thinking about your product and service, and what you have to offer.

Tactics	Notes
Speaking	
Website	
Awards	
Celebrity	
Seminars/Workshops	
Special Events	
Articles in the media	
Radio	
Community Involvement	
Book	
Other online PR	
Newsletter	
Publicity	
Other	

Your Public Relations Plan - Monthly Activities

Month 1 ()

1

2

Month 2 ()

1

2

Month 3 ()

1

2

Month 4 ()

1

2

Month 5 ()

1

2

Month 6 ()

1

2

Month 7 ()

1

2

Month 8 ()

1

2

Month 9 ()

1

2

Month 10 ()

1

2

Month 11 ()

1

2

Month 12 ()

1

2

Once complete, review your plan based on the following:

- Can I conduct these activities with my budget?
- Does this plan help me achieve my business goals?
- Does this plan help me reach my target market?
- Does this plan help me reach referral sources?
- Can I still do my other marketing activities (factor in time, resources, & budget here)
- Am I able to measure success?

Example of a public relations plan for an architectural design and landscaping business.

Principal David is busy each day managing his team on site, drawing up the next designs, plus needing to position long term for new business. He took into account the amount of time he would have to implement his PR plan, and tactics are reflected accordingly

Annual Marketing Budget AUS \$30k

Business Goals I'd like to achieve with this plan

- Grow customer/leads database by 25%
- Increase conversations - 8 design conversations each month
- Develop 6 new primary referral sources

Target Market

- 30+ yo, home owners with disposable income, 2 years post house purchase/renovation

Referral sources:

- Landscape architects seeking construction support
- Builders/architects

Other marketing activities planned:

- Onsite direct mail (letterbox drops in the street of each job) with call to action.
- Advertising in local paper and landscape design glossy magazine

How will I measure success?

- Track all referral sources, monitor sales calls and designs drawn.

Public Relations Tactical Plan for architectural design and landscaping business.

Tactics	Notes
Speaking	
Website	
Awards	Submit top designs for influential awards
Celebrity	
Seminars/Workshops	
Special Events	Good Design Show, Local Golf Charity Sponsorship, Local Home Show, Open Client Gardens.
Articles in the media	Target Media: Local paper life and garden section; Article ideas: Drought proofing your garden; Basic design tips; What inspires
Radio	
Community Involvement	Support local schools - time and materials for gardens at preschools/hospital.
Book	eBook - Designing a sustainable garden, Fitness and Dynamic Gardening
Other online PR	Develop blog spot from website, reuse articles being promoted in the media
Newsletter	Monthly enewsletter
Publicity	Fitness & Dynamic Gardening
Other	National Gardening Day

Entrenched Landscape & Design - Monthly Activities

Month 1 (January)

1 Read Phil's DIY PR Kit

2 Call magazines in target market

Month 2 ()

1 Prepare submission for design awards, contact Design Awards PR agency offering availability for show PR

2 Draft release and submit to local paper on award submission

Month 3 ()

1 Deadline in Better Homes and Gardens for small garden spaces feature - submit client story and pictures

2 Use award submission and Better Homes & Gardens for client newsletter, blog & distribute.

Month 4 ()

1 Complete eBook, upload to website

2 Publicise via local news release, client newsletter, website, blog and letter drops near current jobs

Month 5 ()

1 Secure radio interview about eBook

2 Offer broadcast as MP3 download on website, blog

Month 6 ()

1 Design Awards announced

2 Draft news story on win/placement;

Month 7 ()

1. Work on community garden for local hospital, alert local newspaper.

2. Submit pics and story to local paper, use story in client newsletter, promote radio show MP3

Month 8 ()

1 Update features list, check out opportunities

2 Approach clients to participate in charity open garden event

Month 9 ()

- 1 Invite list and venues finalised for Open garden Event, including media
- 2 Draft news release to local paper with times, venues, quotes from and details of charity receiving funds raised.
3. Begin PR planning for next 12 months, reread Phil's DIY PR Kit.

Month 10 ()

- 1 Follow up invites, finalise numbers
- 2 Final check on venues, arrange catering
3. Follow up with local media and appropriate vertical monthly media to attend

Month 11 ()

- 1 Finalise media kit to present to media at the event (include news release on event, bio, company details, pictures of the gardens)
- 2 Charity Open Garden Event
3. Finalise PR planning for next 12 months

Month 12 ()

- 1 Newsletter to clients, review the event
- 2

CHAPTER FOUR Generating publicity

In order to achieve publicity for yourself or your business, you need to offer what the media wants. Anything that appears on radio, television or in print does so because a journalist or editor has deemed it newsworthy. But what is news?

Most journalists agree that the following eight elements make up what is considered "news."

Immediacy: Reporting something that has just happened or is about to happen. Time is a strong ingredient, "today, yesterday, early this morning, tomorrow." The newness of the occurrence makes up "immediacy" in the news.

Proximity: Facts and occurrences that are important to you personally; inflation, petrol prices, the closing of a fire station close to your home. The question most asked by journalists is: "If this happened outside my immediate area, my city, my state, would I be interested in reading about it?"

Keeping this question in mind is particularly important. You must "take off the I love this organization hat" and examine your story to see if indeed it would interest other readers.

Prominence: Prominence as a news element is well-known to most of us. The public figure, holders of public office, people of renown or those who stimulate our curiosity, people in positions of influence all enjoy news prominence. For your visitor or speaker to qualify for news prominence, he or she must be well enough known to command the attention of readers either by reputation or by the nature of the topic to be discussed.

Oddity: Oddity is often news. The bizarre, the unusual, the unexpected often make news. Generally those people who perform striking feats in emergency situations are news, such as a woman lifting an automobile off her child, travelling around the world in a sailboat, unusual recycling methods, use of materials in a different way. In journalism, oddity is defined as the "man bites dog" formula.

Conflict: Conflict is one element most observed in today's news with the clash of ideologies making headlines worldwide. Although most businesses and organizations shy away from the reporting of conflict, it is understandable that this element is firmly based in the news formula.

Suspense: Suspense creates and expands news appeal. For the most part, organizations would rarely experience this type of circumstance. It is helpful to remember that news suspense is not the same as mystery suspense. However, mystery suspense in news does occur when a crime has been committed and the search is on for a suspect.

Emotions: Emotions are a news element commonly called "human interest" stories that stir our recognition of the basic needs both psychological and physical. Stories that prompt the reader toward sympathy, anger or other emotions in all their variety are commonly handled in feature-type stories. Organizations should be alert to the possibilities of "human interest" stories.

Consequence: The last element of news, consequence, is more difficult to explain, but generally for a story to have consequence it must be important to a great number

of readers. It must have some impact for the reader. Such news will affect him or her in some personal way...the safety of the city's drinking water; running out of drinking water. Thus it becomes an important news story.

From this discussion of news story elements, it becomes clear that you should have these guidelines in mind when you're deciding if your message is news or an announcement; whether it's a feature or an item of limited public interest. From this you decide which format to use for distributing the information and the medium that is most likely to use your information.

To get thinking, start with these questions:

- 1) Have you recently launched, or are about to launch, a new product or service?
- 2) Do something you offer tie into a current trend? Eg: a car that runs on renewable energy sources?
- 3) Is your business unusual in any way? (eg: offering jobs to homeless) - think of your unique selling proposition
- 4) Do you have information people want to know about (how to save thousands off your mortgage, health tips)
- 5) Have you taken the opposite stand to a current issue or have a colourful spokesperson (think Richard Branson)?
- 6) Have you won major awards? Any significant achievements?
- 7) Does your business tie into significant holidays (chocolate stores or jewellers on Valentine's Day)
- 8) Is your business connected to any celebrities or international spokespeople?
- 9) Is your business involved in any charities?

Thinking of your angle or news hook

Simply, a journalist is always going to be looking for a great story, preferably one that hasn't been covered before. Breaking such a story can lead to prestige for the individual journalist, and ratings and advertising sales for news outlets.

The stronger your news angle or 'hook' the greater the possibility of your story being covered. Examples of hooks the media commonly cover include:

- Launch of a new product/service/book
- Tie in with current trend
- Holiday
- Useful advice
- Interesting people or info
- Controversy
- Celebrity
- Fun/quirky
- Contests
- Charity/sponsorships
- Awards
- Free giveaways
- Surveys

Launch of a new product/service/book. Eg: At Christmas, chauffers who drive you & your car home for you after the Christmas party, with their own fold-up scooter in the boot.

Tie in with current trend. Eg: Simple car modifications that make it more fuel efficient, saving on petrol prices

Holiday. There are hundreds of holidays that business can tie into. For example, jewellers on Valentine's Day.

Useful advice. Eg: how to recession-proof your business

Interesting people or info. Eg: How a millionaire first broke the seven-figure turnover mark

Controversy. Eg: Taking the opposite position in a popular debate

Celebrity. Eg: Always a favourite with the media, international celebrities are the most popular, but local celebrities work well too. Eg: An award-winning actress wearing your latest dress design on the red carpet.

Fun/quirky. Anything out of the ordinary that captures people's attention. Eg: when members of the Rylstone & Districts Women's Institute in the UK discreetly posed nude on the annual calendar while engaged in everyday activities, such as baking and knitting, in order to raise funds.

Contests. By nature, people are competitive and they always like to cheer on others. Think of the popularity of contests such as Idol or so you think you can dance. EG: Local butcher who puts on a 'eat the most hot dogs'; landscape designer who runs a 'Best Garden Makeover' competition.

Charity/sponsorships. People like to see others performing charitable deeds. Use your business to support a charity you believe in, or sponsor a local community group.

Awards. Recognition by peers gains you credibility. Apply for awards within your industry.

Free giveaways. People always like a free trial and it's a great call to action. Gyms for example offer "Buy three months and get an extra month free" as part of membership drives.

Surveys. Anything independently assessed offers greater credibility. You can survey your customer base, or pay for a research company to conduct research on your behalf.

I always recommend in my PR Coaching workshops that people get together and brainstorm. You are sometimes so close to your organisation that you can't see the angles. A third-party with a fresh pair of eyes often unearths new PR gems.

CHAPTER 5 Using editorial calendars

It's helpful to know what topics publications are covering throughout the year in order to help generate publicity for yourself or your business. Editorial Calendars list topics and special editorial coverage.

Editorial Calendars are usually in advertising sales kits. The calendar topics are included so advertisers can tie advertising into topics covered in the publication. You can sometimes find an Editorial Calendar in the advertising section at the publication's website. If you can't find it there, contact the publication's marketing/sales department and ask them to send it to you.

How to Use Editorial Calendars to Gain Publicity

Editorial Calendars are extremely useful when pitching story ideas, so you can tie your story ideas into those topics.

Here are some tips to make the most of your story pitching:

1. **Research the publication.** Understand the publication's focus and how your product or service might fit in. If you can tie a pending editorial calendar opportunity together with a story idea, you will have a far greater chance of receiving coverage.
2. **Make sure that the Editorial Calendar topics are still relevant.** More than half of the publications with Editorial Calendars will change those calendars throughout the year. So confirm topics by checking with the advertising department.
3. **Offer story ideas with enough leadtime.** The leadtime for publications varies, and can be as much as six months or more. If you're not sure of the leadtime, assume three to six months.

CHAPTER 6 Creating a press kit

In order to conduct an effective publicity campaign, you'll need a press kit. If you're providing product samples, such as a book, then you'll need a printed press kit as well as an online version. However, providing a CD with your online files burnt to it will often suffice in place of print. Include:

- company fact sheet
- backgrounder
- biography
- press release.

Company Fact Sheet

This information is usually one or two pages. A fact sheet contains the basics:

- Description of company, when you were founded, company history
- Description of key products and services
- Listing of special achievements / awards
- Listing of key personnel with contact information
- Listing of company headquarters address and contact information (website, etc.)
- Listing of financial information, including revenue (I recommend including this only when necessary, to the media - not for public viewing on your website)
- Number of employees (if useful) and listing of all locations.

Company Backgrounder

Depending on the other press materials, this information can include in-depth industry information (especially for a new or rapidly changing industry), or more information on the company or its origins.

Biographies

Biographies provide the media with additional information about key personnel. The CEO/MD and other media contacts or key individuals should have biographies.

This information can be in text or bullet form and should be no more than one page. A comprehensive bio includes:

- Name, title, list of responsibilities
- Education, awards
- Professional affiliations
- Community involvement

- Personal information (optional)
- Anything of interest that might make this person stand out to the media

Press Release

You can also include a press release on a new or current product/service, to provide a possible angle for the media. Following is a format you can use.

Press Release Format

FROM: Company Name, Address, Logo if appropriate

CONTACT: Name, Area Code and Contact Number

For Immediate Release

HEADLINE (larger, bold, underline, center, can be several lines)

City, State Abbreviation, Day, Month, Year - Lead paragraph (double-space)

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXX

Paragraph 2: Who does this appeal to and why?

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXX

Paragraph 3: Create a quote from the owner or a principal of the company that gives additional information

XX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

Paragraph 4: Detail additional facts from Paragraph 3

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXX

Paragraph 5: Give costs of products, services and/or company details and background

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXXXXXX

XX
XXXXXX

Additional Press Kit Information

Testimonials

Testimonials are very powerful as it's a third party praising your products or services. *My [Boost Business with Testimonials Blueprint](#)* is a fantastic roadmap to collecting, writing and using testimonials across your business. To get you started here are some tips:

- Get written permission to use testimonials.
- Ask customers if they would like you to write the testimonial that they can approve.
- Include a variety of industries and company/organisation sizes.
- Ask testimonial providers to be as specific as possible (include results obtained, for example: increased sales by 30%, cut carbon emissions by 50%, saved \$25,000 on taxes)

- Include person's name, title, company name and location
- Include testimonials that cover a variety of your products and services

Photographs

Include a black and white and color headshot of your owner(s) and key management personnel. Also make these available as .jpg files (on your website if possible) at a resolution of 300 dots per inch (dpi) or better. If you have photos of your products and services, or interesting events, satisfied customers, etc., include them in print and have them available electronically as well.

Publicity Reprints

To enhance your sales and marketing efforts, include in your marketing materials, on your website, print or electronic reprints of newspaper or magazine articles written about you or your business.

Packaging

If you need a printed press kit, put all the material together in a two-pocket folder, preferably with your company name and logo on the cover. Include your business card on the inside business card flap. Or you can burn all the information to a CD that can be handed out.

Online Press Kit

All of the information listed in the Press Kit can be included in your Online Press Kit. Create a separate button on your website with "Press Room" or "Online Press Kit" and include all the information electronically.

CHAPTER 7 Pitching to the media

When it comes to publicity, many DIYers want to get as much as possible as often as possible. I call this a love affair with column inches. Actually your goal should be to pinpoint media that your potential clients read, listen to or view. Otherwise, too much time and effort might be spent getting publicity that never reaches your target market.

How to Find Your Target Media

To find your target media, think about the demographics of your ideal client: age, gender, income, geography, etc. The more specific you are, the better you will be able to tailor your public relations efforts to the right audience.

Now you need to match your ideal client to the media that he/she reads, listens to or views. This will take a little research on your part. The media list might include daily and community newspapers, business journals, radio stations, TV stations, local magazines, and national media outlets.

The Pitching Process

Once you've found your target media, you'll need to prepare your pitch. Media Pitching is one of the most dreaded activities of many Public Relations professionals, and business owners and professionals who want to get media coverage on their own.

Why is it so nerve-wracking? Probably because it's similar to "cold calling". So before you make that call, you need to be prepared. I have created a worksheet that you can fill in that will help you with the preparation and management of your pitching. It is at the end of this pitching section.

Preparing to pitch

In my experience, successful media relations are 98% preparation and 2% execution.

Step 1 - Research the media outlet.

Access a Media Directory (I use AAP's MediaAtlas - <http://www.aapmedianet.com.au>) and look up the media outlet. Find the appropriate reporter, producer or editor for your story pitch (see Finding the Right Media Contact, below). Then call the media outlet's main number and make sure the reporter is still there (they move around a lot). If not, ask who his/her replacement is and get the appropriate contact info (name, telephone number and e-mail address). Put that information into your worksheet (example is at the end of this section). Then, move on to the next step.

2. Research the reporter. Read past stories, and check out their contact preferences if you are using a Media Directory. The contact preferences may include how the contacts like to be contacted (phone or e-mail, for example) and when they like to be contacted (before 2 p.m., Monday-Wednesday). I'll usually always heed the "when they like to be contacted part," but I almost always call them, even if they say they don't prefer it, because it's a part of my successful pitching process.

3. Familiarise yourself with the outlet and its particular focus.

Save yourself time and embarrassment by doing your homework first. Watch several episodes of a TV show, listen to several radio shows (often available on the Internet), read several issues of magazines and blogs, and a week's worth of newspapers, to really get a feel for a media outlet.

4. Find past articles they've published that are similar to what you're pitching. Try and make sure they didn't just print the exact same story within the last few months. You want to pitch ideas that are similar to what they've already run, but not so close as to be redundant. Whenever possible, target a feature or special section. This gives the editor an idea of how your story idea may fit into the publication.

5. Prepare pitch points with all the pertinent facts about your company and the story you're pitching before you call. This is vital, especially if your mind goes blank when the editor answers the phone. Having your press materials in paper form in front of you is also very helpful, especially if you get asked detailed questions.

6. Prepare more than one story angle. Don't waste everybody's time by putting all of your P.R. eggs in one basket. Have a few to suggest. This shows editors you're savvy enough to know they may not bite on a single story. It often makes the difference between success and failure to get placements.

7. Keep your worksheet open on your computer while you're making calls. Then you will be able to immediately fill in the details of your activity instead of trying to remember everything later (pretty impossible).

Finding the Right Media Contact

At the agency we use the AAP's online media atlas. It is available online at <http://www.aapmedianet.com.au>. The online database is continually updated and contains thousands of contacts in every type of media outlet. Searching globally, your subscription level reflects the number of countries you want to search. It's fairly expensive, but most P.R. firms find that a media database is critical.

Another great resource is Margaret Gee's Australian Media Guide, available in print and online. It is also more economical, roughly less than A\$50 a month for single user access to the online database for 12 months.

<http://www.crowncontent.com.au/mgeesmediaguide.html>

Mediabay is Australia's free to access online media directory. Mediabay delivers contemporary information on all sectors of the media: owners, brands, contacts, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, website links and more. Updated by media suppliers, it isn't necessarily extensive, but an economical place to start your search. <http://www.mediabay.com.au/>

Media contacts in book form, for different types of media outlets may also be available at your local library.

All fee-for-access directories list all the editorial contacts for each media outlet. Each contact name will include contact and sometimes pitching information.

If you don't want to use fee-for-access directories, try these research tips:

- In publications, the editorial staff is listed on the masthead, as is the main number for the publication. Sometimes the contact information for each editorial contact is also included; if not, call the publication's main number and ask for it
- On TV, producers are often listed at the end of a segment; the main number can be found on the TV station's website
- Many media outlets have websites that contain editorial contact information. Blogs almost always include contact information for the blog writer.

Three Critical Pitching Steps

1. Call your contact and make a brief phone pitch (have your pitch points in front of you, as well as your press materials).
2. Send additional information.
3. Follow up.

Step 1: Call Your Contact and Make a Brief Phone Pitch.

Why make a phone call instead of just sending a press release? So you can 'pre-sell' your idea. Reporters receive hundreds of emails a day, including many press releases and pitches. But if you can get interest from a reporter *before* you send in information, you're much more likely to receive publicity coverage.

Now, of course, that's not to say that you'll always be greeted by a warm, welcoming voice. Most reporters are busy and get loads of calls like these, many of which are not even viable for their media. As a journalist, my pet hate was being called by someone after they had emailed their press release, just to check if I'd received it. So sometimes media people will be grumpy. Mostly they will sound rushed. Don't let it put you off.

Phone Tips

Speak in a low, confident voice.

Stand up if it helps - it opens your diaphragm - and breathe from your solar plexus. Be concise and confident.

I rarely ask if the reporter is busy - they typically are - but kick straight in with the pitch.

Here are the pitch points that I used for a client launching a new environmentally-friendly printer. This was a pitch for the Government News Technology Reporter.

"Hi K, it seems like everywhere you look there are businesses looking to improve their green, sustainable performance, don't you think?

"I know you're writing about ways government departments are reducing carbon emissions and saving money. My client XXX has a new multifunction technology that's the first in its product category to achieve Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) Certification.

Can we set up an interview this Thursday at 10am or Monday at 2pm with AK the sustainability manager there?

Here is the same script, explaining why I wrote it the way I did:

“Hi K, it seems like everywhere you look there are businesses looking to improve their green, sustainable performance, don’t you think? *This is the angle - and it’s tied into current events - and it gets a “yes” response - the Socratic method of gaining agreement.*

- *Then go right into the pitch, quickly explain the angle.*

I know you’re writing about ways government departments are reducing carbon emissions and saving money. My client XXX has a new multifunction technology that’s the first in its product category to achieve Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) Certification. *This shows why the media’s audience would be interested plus the award demonstrates credibility, which the media loves.*

Can we set up an interview this Thursday at 10am or Monday at 2pm with AK the sustainability manger there? *This is the call to action you want the media to take.*

After You Make the Initial Pitch -- Additional Pitch Points

At that point, the reporter will say he is or isn’t interested. If he’s not interested, he will generally tell you why (he might not cover your type of company). You should then pitch one of the other angles that he would be more interested in (don’t forget to create pitch points for those additional angles). If he’s still not interested, you can ask him if there is someone else on staff who might be writing these types of stories (other business writers, for instance). Then ask for the person’s contact information. Before you end the conversation, ask him if you can help him in any way, by providing sources or additional story ideas he might be interested in.

Almost always he will be pleasantly surprised and will give you that information.

If he is interested, he may ask you for more information. Be prepared with **additional pitch points**. Here’s what I used for Government News:

“AK is XXX’s Sustainability Manager, and XXX is one of the few independently audited sustainability reporters in Australia. And countering carbon emission problems are a definite trend across government and business. Some interesting statistics support these issues. The use of ICT equipment accounts for 1.52% of Australia’s carbon emissions. There is a clear opportunity for the ICT sector to reduce that figure - developing a sustainable office document system is one of the mega trends for business in the future, and one in which XXX excels. One of its larger government clients has reduced carbon emissions by approximately 13 tonnes per month since turning to XXX for a sustainable office document system.

Can we set up an interview this Thursday at 10am or Monday at 2pm with AK?

Here is the same script, explaining why I wrote it the way I did:

“AK is XXX’s Sustainability Manager, and XXX is one of the few independently audited sustainability reporters in Australia. *Shows credibility, very important to the media.* And countering carbon emission problems are a definite trend across government and

business. Some interesting statistics support these issues. *The media loves statistics - the more recent, the better.* The use of ICT equipment accounts for 1.52% of Australia's carbon emissions. There is a clear opportunity for the ICT sector to reduce that figure - developing a sustainable office document system is one of the mega trends for business in the future, and one in which XXX excels. One of its larger government clients has reduced carbon emissions by approximately 13 tonnes per month since turning to XXX for a sustainable office document system. *This shows further credibility, substantiated by client testimony pertinent to media audience.* Can we set up an interview this Thursday at 10am or Monday at 2pm with AK? *Reiterate the call to action that you want the media person to take.*

After You Make the Entire Pitch

Now that you've given a very detailed summary, several things can happen:

- He can ask you to send him information in writing (see Step 2)
- He can say he'd like to set up an interview
- He can say he'd like to think about it - ask him if you can check in with him on a certain date -he'll either agree to the date or give you an alternate date. If he says he'll call you if he's interested, ask him if you can call him in a few weeks to update your file
- He can say no to the opportunity

What if the Media Person Only Accepts E-Mail Submissions, or I Can't Get Through to the Media Person on the Phone?

Leave a voice message if possible, briefly explaining your pitch, and say you will drop them an email. Then email your initial pitch. Here is an example:

E-Mail Subject Line: Reducing office carbon emissions by 13 tons per month

April 27, 2005

MEDIA CONTACT NAME HERE

Dear NAME:

It seems like everywhere you look there are businesses looking to improve their green, sustainable performance, don't you think?

I know you're writing about ways government departments are reducing carbon emissions and saving money. My client, Fuji Xerox, has a new multifunction technology that's the first in its product category to achieve Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) Certification.

Would you be interested in speaking to AK the sustainability manager there?

A is Fuji Xerox's Sustainability Manager, and Fuji Xerox is one of the few independently audited sustainability reporters in Australia. And countering carbon emission problems are a definite trend across government and business. Some interesting statistics support these issues.

The use of ICT equipment accounts for 1.52% of Australia's carbon emissions. There is a clear opportunity for the ICT sector to reduce that figure - developing a sustainable office document system is one of the mega trends for business in the future, and one in which Fuji Xerox excels. One of its larger government clients has reduced carbon emissions by approximately 13 tons per month since turning to Fuji Xerox for a sustainable office document system.

Can we set up an interview this Thursday at 10am or Monday at 2pm with AK?

Sincerely,

Philippa Lowe

Just Go Write, Signature Public Relations

61 2 9528 8784

pjl@justgowrite.com.au

The same four possibilities can happen as if you were making a phone pitch. Or you can hear nothing back. In that case, it's okay to try calling and making the pitch.

Step 2: Send Additional Information.

- At this point you can tell the reporter that you have a Press Release, Fact Sheet, Backgrounder and Biography. Which ones would he like, or would he like them all? And would he like you to send them via email or fax? Make sure you confirm the contact information.
- Then ask when you can check in with him again.
- If he says to call him on a certain date, put it on your calendar
- If he says he'll call you, say that's great, but if he doesn't call you by (give a date a few days later), can you call him? Usually he'll say "yes". Reporters are notorious for not getting back to you (a story comes up or they are on deadline for something else that day), so it's good to have a firm date to follow up

Of course, your Press Release, Fact Sheet, Backgrounder and Biography will already be prepared, so you can send them out immediately.

How to Send Out Press Materials

Your press materials were probably created in MS Word. However, it's important to remember that the media doesn't like attachments, because many of them contain viruses. So here are some tips:

- Never send press materials in an attachment via e-mail. Cut and paste your information into the body of the message
- Don't send photographs or artwork unless requested
- Write catchy Subject Lines - but not so catchy that they look like "spam" -- or they might get deleted
- It's important to remember that media people get hundreds of e-mails a day, many of them unsolicited. Several reporters have told me that they just delete most of these. That's why it's important to pre-sell the idea first in a phone pitch. Then, what has worked for me, is to include the words "as discussed" or "as per our phone call" in the beginning of the Subject Line of the e-mail. I tell the media person that I will be putting that in my e-mail and then they know to open the e-mail.

Step 3: Follow Up.

On the date you have both agreed to, call the reporter and check on the status of your story. At this point you will either have sent him additional information, or you will be following up on your verbal pitch. You need to ask the following questions:

- Are you interested in doing the story? If he says "yes," ask him if he would like to set up a time for an interview. After the interview, ask him when he thinks the piece may run, and make sure to check the media outlet that day and the rest of that week.
- Don't ask for a copy of the piece; that's your responsibility.
- Please remember to send a thank-you note. I can't re-iterate this enough - it will always make you stand out from the 99% of people who don't. And it will help you create a relationship with the reporter for ongoing publicity opportunities.

By preparing your pitch and pitching the right way, you can look forward to successful media relationships and great media coverage.

Media Worksheet Example

Media Worksheet: Fuji Xerox - Sustainable Office Printing

Story Angle #1: New multifunction device that's first in its product category to achieve Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) Certification.

Story Angle #2: Carbon reduction trends in ICT industry, how simple print device consolidation has a huge impact.

Story Angle #3: Gov department sees large decrease in carbon emissions due to switch to Fuji Xerox's sustainable office document system.

Contact	Outlet	Title	Phone	Email	Angle	Results
KG	Government News	Technology Editor	61 2 99443327	contact@media.com.au	#1 & #3	Interested. Interview scheduled for dd/mm/yy. Background info emailed dd/mm/yy. Follow up dd/mm/yyy

CHAPTER 8 Interview Tips

Gaining a media interview after a successful pitch is exhilarating. However, you may probably feel a bit nervous, especially if you've never been interviewed before. Later in this section I'll be covering specific interview tips for different types of media, but here are some important points to remember in all interviews:

1. Before you start the interview, have the following on a piece of paper in front of you:

Your key point -- the one thing you really want the reporter to cover

Your name, title, business and website as you would like them to appear

Something useful that readers/viewers/listeners of the media outlet would be able to find at your website (a free report, booklet, quiz, etc.) -- this gives the media outlet a reason to include your website information

Several other sources that can offer information on the same subject -- reporters usually have to interview more than one source, and if you give them that information, you are doing the following: (i) giving the names of sources in your industry who you feel comfortable being in a story with you and (ii) solidifying your reputation with the reporter, who will usually feel obligated to give you a nice position in the story for being so helpful by providing other sources.

Say only what you would like quoted. No jokes, sarcastic remarks or off-the-record comments. They might be taken at face value -- and printed as fact.

Be polite -- even if you've been kept waiting, or are troubled by some of the questions.

Never disparage anyone, especially your competition (you'll always get more respect when you take the high road).

If you don't know the answer, say that you don't, but that you'll get it to the reporter after the interview.

Never say "no comment"; this is a red flag to the media. Instead, you can say "we are currently looking into that matter and we'll let you know more when we are ready to release that information".

Don't use acronyms or industry jargon that you're familiar with - but others may not be.

Don't mention other publicity you've received, unless you're specifically asked. The media overwhelmingly prefers to report stories and use sources that are not "overexposed". Bringing up other media you have been covered in is at best a turnoff, and at worst will result in the reporter deciding not to cover your story.

Use analogies, stories and "quick bite" answers when possible.

Be aware of the reporter's time. Assume he/she doesn't have much, and make sure you answer quickly.

Use quick, interesting statistics or facts to make important points (eg: Turning off the vending machine overnight for one week saves 38 kg of carbon dioxide)

Make the same key point three times. This makes it more likely to be covered.

At the end of your interview, confirm the spelling of your name, title, business, phone number and website as you would like them to appear.

After all of your interviews, thank the reporter and ask when the story will appear. When it does, make sure to send a thank-you note, hand written is best. Most people don't, so you will be remembered favorably the next time a publicity opportunity comes along.

What happens if the media contacts me first and I've had no time to prepare?

Most importantly, don't panic. Remember this is a great opportunity. How you handle a reporter who contacts you for a story can have a major impact on the outcome.

Most important is that you don't simply adopt a passive approach and seek to diligently answer all the questions the reporter has for you.

It pays to engage in dialogue and ask a few key questions such as:

Who are you?

Find out exactly who the reporter is, whether they regularly cover this topic or this is just a one-off assignment, and how much knowledge they have on the subject.

What has prompted you to ring me?

Why is the reporter calling you? How has the story arisen?

What is the story about?

What 'angle' is the reporter pursuing? What approach is the reporter hoping to take?

What other sources/people are you contacting?

Find out whom else the reporter is seeking comment from. It will tell you a lot about the story approach as well as guide you as to how you can fit in. And try and find out whether you are the first person the reporter has spoken to or one of many.

What is your deadline?

This is vital. It tells you whether you need to answer right now or you can buy some time and get back later with a more considered answer. If the deadline isn't pressing, ask when you can call them back. Don't expect them to call you back. If the interview is important to you, agree on a time, and keep it.

What background information can I provide?

If you can put yourself in a position to provide background - by fax or email or even direct them to a web site - then you can potentially get a bigger say in the story.

Will there be any specific questions that will require facts and figures?

If you can support your points with current facts and figures, you will gain credibility as well as the interviewer's respect.

The key assessment you need to make during this process is whether you are just a 'bit player' as part of a 'round up' story asking a range of people for reactions. In this case you will get a minor quote or a sentence. Your likely response should be to simply answer the questions being very mindful of how you fit with others likely to be quoted.

If however there is the potential for you to be a key component in the story then it's important that you quickly establish a rapport with the reporter, especially if you are the first he/she has spoken to. Often the first source or person spoken to provides the basis and focus for the story and the reporter uses this as the lead and then simply has others commenting or reacting.

Here are additional tips to make the most of your interviews, depending on the medium.

Print Interview Tips

Print interviews are often conducted over the phone. Occasionally they are conducted in person. Either way, your best bet is to have some notes handy.

Providing Information

Your notes should include a few key points that you'd like to make. This is important because the reporter is basing his information on what he hears. **For print interviews, it's critically important to mention your main key point three times.** Especially if it's a phone interview, the reporter may get distracted or not hear you if you mention a key point just once. Never give information that is "off the record".

Tell the reporter that you will e-mail him your contact information. This way, there's a great chance that this information will be correct. Include your name, title, business name, phone number, website address. Ask the reporter if they will be able to include all of this information as many publications have policies on what types of contact information they can include.

Photos

When the interview is complete, the reporter may set up a time for a photographer to take your picture. If a picture isn't mentioned, you should offer to send your head shot.

Publication

It's acceptable to ask if the reporter knows when the piece might be appearing. Make sure to pick up a copy when it does. Don't ask the reporter to send you a copy. He will get irritated, since this is your responsibility.

TV Interview Tips

TV isn't all glamour, fame, and stars appearances. However TV appearances can get you a huge boost for your brand. You need to learn how to become the guest every producer wants.

TV stations make you pay for commercial time. So it's important to understand the difference between a commercial and an interview.

Rarely will a TV interview be a profile of you or your product. Rather, you'll be asked for your insight about the industry or a story in the news because of expertise in your field.

Speak in Sound Bytes

Most answers in a TV interview are less than a minute long, most just 10-20 seconds. Can you condense your point to that length? Watch the guests who are on all the time. What makes them good?

Smile, if It's Appropriate

This should be like a conversation you're having with a friend, about something you're passionate about. This should go without saying, but be familiar with the shows you want to be on. Know the host's style and pacing, and the kind of segments they typically do.

Always Be Ready

If you really want to be a TV talking head, you have to be willing to drop whatever you're doing whenever they call for you. If you don't, there are many other guests who will, and they're the ones the producers remember. One spokesperson I know keeps his 'TV clothes' in the car. Don't miss a booking because you're not dressed appropriately.

Tough Questions - The Bridging Technique

During live interviews, you have to always be “on” and ready to answer tough questions, including ones that may be adversarial or get off the track. Make sure you are able to transition to different topics. Don’t get angry or emotional. This is called the bridging technique and it’s vital you master it. It’s especially important in radio and TV interviews.

What is 'bridging'? Responding to a negative question from a reporter by answering in a way that allows you to present a positive message and/or the message you want to give.

It sounds easy, but it takes practice and guidance to be able to successfully implement. And if you are too quick to implement it you will come across as not wanting to address the question or topic at hand.

Example:

Interviewer - "Mr X, isn't it serious that you are selling products with a 25% fat content to kids under 12 years of age"?

Respondent - "I'm not sure that our product is really a key issue. What is more important is that parents understand the importance of a balanced diet containing a mix of foods.

The key to bridging is to acknowledge the answer but to also find a way to ‘bridge’ to the message you want to give.

Politicians are the most blatant users of the bridging technique - watch your next television news bulletin or current affairs program to see how good some of them are at it. In many cases they fail to even address the question.

Here are some phrases you can use:

- That’s something we may address in the future, but right now our primary concern is (your message here)
- I can neither confirm nor deny that but what I can tell you is (your message here)
- I can’t speak to that, but what I can tell you is (your message here)
- That’s an interesting aspect, but our primary focus is (your message here)

Radio Interview Tips

Radio may not be as “sexy” as TV, but don’t discount it. Radio is often the best way to sell books and/or generate awareness of you, your company, your product or service. Segments are usually longer than those on television, the spots are easier to get, and there are seemingly endless outlets that are looking for guests. You may only get a handful of TV interviews, but with radio you can easily get five or ten times that number.

How Radio Interviews Work

Radio interviews are often conducted over the phone. Occasionally they are conducted in person if the station is local. Most times they are live.

Like TV, radio interview times, even when you're given a specific time period, can vary. While you may be told that you have 10 minutes or 30 minutes, that could change to two minutes or an hour, depending on what's happening at that time.

Making the Most of Your Radio Experience

Radio shows can be several hours long, with many guest segments throughout the show. If you're offered a choice of several time slots, ask which has more listeners and take that one, even if it's less convenient for you. The extra audience is worth the inconvenience.

If you have a book or product, ask if you can provide a few for giveaways. This will ensure that the show does a little extra promotion for your segment, meaning you'll probably get more time and you'll definitely have more listeners.

Radio is very much a background medium. Understand that most people listening to you will also be driving, getting ready for work, chasing their kids, cleaning their house or doing any number of other things. Your challenge is to break through all of that and get the majority of their attention. Start listening to talk radio every day to see who gets your attention and why.

Preparing for Your Radio Interview

Before the interview, do your homework - know who the host is, what the audience is like, what kinds of guests they usually have. You can usually get a good feel for this from the station/program website if it's not in your home market.

If it's a local radio, check the home newspaper of the station you are going to be on and try to mention a big local story, whether it's a large business opening or closing, a sports team that's made headlines or a local celebrity in the news. Playing to the local audience will help engage the listeners.

Listen to the show for several days before your interview if at all possible - many stations now stream online so you can listen to shows outside of your home market. Get a feel for the host's personality and how he/she interacts with guests. Plus you'll know what topics they've covered recently and ensure that you're advancing the story or providing new information.

Before the interview, clear away anything that could distract you. We all have the tendency to multi-task while on the phone, but when you're being interviewed, all your attention should be directed to the interview.

Make a list of bullet points that you want to hit while on the show. Make them short, and remember not to sound like a salesman. If you are entertaining, people will want to buy your book or product, but they'll tune out a direct sales pitch.

Don't forget to cancel call waiting on your phone, turn off your cell, lock up the dog, and get rid of anything that could make noise until the interview is over. Always do interviews from a landline, not your mobile, and never use a speakerphone. If you're

at home, make sure your family knows not to pick up the phone when you are doing your interviews.

During the Radio Interview

Once the segment begins, understand that radio talk show hosts are people who love the sound of their own voice. Anticipate that they will be quite wordy in their introductions and in their questioning, and don't let that throw you.

Try to match the host's tone and energy. Follow their lead and try not to interrupt. Remember you've been booked to entertain and educate, not to sell a product or service.

On the radio, the audience has only sound to keep their attention, so be lively! Grab their attention from the start and keep your energy up.

Make sure your voice sounds smooth. Have water or a hard lolly to make your voice great. Don't forget to change the tone of your voice and show some emotion. As this is an auditory medium, your voice and tone can make or break an interview. Let your personality come through. The audience needs to relate to you as a person, not just as an expert.

Give the audience information that they can use to solve a problem, make something easier, buy something cheaper or make their lives better. Write it on a note card and keep it in front of you to remind you.

Speak in conversational language. Drop the industry jargon and make your information broadly accessible.

Make your information relevant. Tie in to a hot news story, or be provocative and take a controversial stand on an issue. One way a host or producer will measure your success as a guest is by the number of callers your segment generates, so the more oomph, the better!

Know how much time you'll have, and watch the clock as you go along so you'll know when it's time to start wrapping up, and you can work in any information that hasn't been covered.

Thank You and Next Steps

Thank the host and producer profusely and let them know you're available to come back any time they need you. Ask if they can link to your website or if they need anything else from you. Be a pleasure to work with and you'll be asked back.

Don't make it a habit, but if you feel an interview went particularly well, and if you feel you've established a good rapport with the host or producer, ask for an MP3 of the interview. If they say they can't do it, accept graciously.

After each interview, make some notes about what worked and what didn't so that over time you can perfect your act.

Chapter 9 Media and Publicity Guidelines

Here are some important guidelines to remember in your media relations' efforts:

When the media calls, stop what you are doing and give them your full attention.

If the media person is supposed to call you for an interview and doesn't, call him/her five minutes later.

A reporter can interview you for an hour and you might have only one line in the story or segment. Or none. Depending on how the story goes or space available or the editor's whim, any of the above can happen. The reporters owe you nothing for your time.

You have control over advertising; you have minimal control over PR. A media piece may not contain the "story" that you would like covered. It may focus on a different angle. The reporter determines what angle to use, depending on his/her needs and information you provide. You may not like a quote that was attributed to you, or you may not like how you looked on TV. This is part of the PR process.

Sometimes, after a phone interview, you will be misquoted. This is pretty typical. Unless it is truly a libelous or slanderous comment, you should take it in stride. DO NOT decide to complain to the reporter, or you will certainly not be getting any press, at least not favorable press, in that media again.

Sure, you prefer a feature story about your business. However, even a brief mention can be very valuable to your publicity goals. Most media outlets work on many more stories that cover trends or groups of businesses in an industry, instead of profiling just one business.

You can be scheduled for an interview, and it may get cancelled at the last minute due to another news story that takes priority. This is typical in the media and something you should understand. Remember, the goal of the media is to report on news, not to get you publicity.

Do not mention other media that have given you publicity coverage, unless you are specifically asked. The media overwhelmingly prefers to report stories and use sources that are not "overexposed". Bringing up other media you have been covered in is at best a turnoff, and at worst will result in the reporter deciding not to cover your story.

Give several contact numbers, including day, night and weekend, to your interviewer.

Advise others around you (staff, family, friends) to interrupt you for calls from the media. The calls will generally be time-sensitive. Often if the media can't reach you immediately, they will go to another source.

Be realistic about when the media will cover you. Typically, daily newspapers, radio and TV have a one-day to three-month coverage window. Magazines have a 2-3 month to one-year window. The lead times vary depending on editorial calendars, seasonal coverage and breaking news.

The media chooses when they want to run a story; you have little control over when they run it, unless it is tied in with a timely event, such as a holiday. You might want your story to run immediately, but the media may hold it for months.

Don't assume or expect the media to include contact information on how to find you. They are writing the story for news value, not to promote your business. Of course you should include your contact information when pitching a story, but you should also make it easy for customers to find you if no contact information is available in the story. That means having a listed telephone number, an ad in the Yellow Pages, or a website.

Local media tends to cover local businesses and organisations in more depth. Unless your business or organization is incredibly unique or unusual, national media outlets almost always use several organizations as sources for stories.

If you are interested in getting media coverage, spend time reading, listening to the radio and watching TV. The more you understand what the media likes to cover, the more likely that you will create great media angles.

Think like a customer of the media in order to create great media angles. For instance, if you were a reader of the business section of the local daily newspaper, what would interest you? The fact that a new shop opened, or a new way to increase sales?

Chapter 10 Speaking Engagements

For public relations purposes, I'm talking about free speaking engagements. Again, this is another win-win situation. You, the "expert" offer a free speech, to help listeners. In return, you receive confirmation of your expertise by being a speaker, and you can also get free P.R. by offering an introduction and a handout of tips, including a byline describing what you do, how to contact you and a call to action.

A call to action is important. It's creating a motivator for people to contact you. Examples include a free consultation, a free Special Report and a discount on products and services.

How Can I Get Speaking Engagements?

Most communities have lots of business and social meetings that are looking for speakers. These meetings are often listed in the business and community sections of your daily newspaper or in business journals and other publications, including online.

Groups that typically need free speakers include:

- Chambers of Commerce
- Business Enterprise Centres
- Business Groups
- Professional Association or Trade Groups
- Charitable Groups

Here are some other ways I have found speakers or they have found me:

- Heard a great speaker at another meeting
- Read a newsletter or guest column or feature article about someone who looked interesting
- Referral
- Met someone with an interesting topic

What Can I Speak About?

The best way to come up with ideas is to attend several meetings of the group you'd like to speak to. This will give you an idea of the types of topics that get covered, as well as topics that have already been covered.

Always keep in mind your target audience. If you're not sure, ask the Program Chairperson. When deciding on topics, think about what the audience would want to hear, not what you'd like to tell them.

It's important to make sure that your speech is interactive -- especially during mealtimes. We've all been subjected to boring speakers. Your audience will appreciate being involved.

How Can I Increase My Chances of Becoming a Speaker?

Call or e-mail the Program Chair or speaking contact of a group to see if he/she is interested in your topic. If he/she is interested, you might need to send a paragraph about your topic and a biography.

Speakers are often booked months in advance, so you may have to wait a while. Or, you might get lucky and fill in for a last-minute cancellation.

How Long Should My Speech Be?

Speech times vary, and this is something you need to ask the Program Chair or speaking contact. At many business meetings, you will have 20-40 minutes to speak, including a Q&A session at the end. Remember - less is more.

If you hate public speaking

You can choose to use other public relations tactics. Or you can join organisations like Toastmasters, to improve your speaking skills. You can find listings of Toastmaster meetings in your daily newspaper or visit www.toastmasters.org, where you can find a listing of local clubs and tips.

Chapter 11: Seminars and Workshops

Workshops are hands-on, interactive ways for people to learn from experts. Think about the information you have that other people would love to know about.

Workshops can be a nice source of income - and bring you publicity and future prospects. One of the problems with workshops, of course, is that it takes a lot of work to put them together. However, there are ways to make the process easier and more profitable.

Step 1: Determine Topics.

First, you need to identify possible **workshop topics**. But how do you do that?

- **Think about your job experience.** I run PR coaching workshops for small businesses because I have a wealth of knowledge and am able to share it.
- **Reflect on volunteer activities.**
- **Consider your passions and hobbies.** A dear friend loves shopping and putting outfits together, so she now runs 'Trinny and Susannah' style workshops to help men and women pick clothes that best suit them.

Step 2: Fill an Unmet Need.

Take some time to figure out if there is demand for your workshop. Here are some questions to ask:

- Are you considered an expert on this topic?
- Do people regularly ask you for your advice on this topic?
- Are there similar workshops or classes already offered on this topic, by other business people, colleges, high schools or industry associations?

Step 3: Price Your Workshop Effectively.

Another important step is determining the price of the workshop. The price should depend on the "going rate" for workshops for your target market in your area, as well as the difficulty of finding this information.

Always allow several **payment options** for your workshops. Credit cards are a must. Determine a **cancellation policy**. While some workshop presenters offer no options to people who cancel, it's a good practice to be flexible within reason. You may want to offer a full refund for cancellations by an early date, and partial refunds and/or credit towards future workshops for cancellations within two weeks of the workshop. You may want to try different pricing options to get potential participants to sign up quickly. Offered "for a limited time" or until a certain date, these tactics are very effective:

- Early-bird pricing
- 2 for 1 specials
- Group pricing
- Discounts for signing up for more than one workshop

Step 4: Choose a Great Location.

The next step is determining the location of your event. This includes the city and the site where the workshop will be held.

Some points to consider:

Your target market. Do they expect a hotel or would a community hall or club be fine?

The cost. Do you have the budget to rent a hotel room?

Equipment needed. Do you need special presentation equipment?

Refreshments. Do you need to provide food and beverages?

Accessibility. Is it accessible to major roads and/or trains or buses? Is there plenty of parking?

Possible sites include hotels, community halls, conference rooms from friends or clients, restaurants or function rooms within restaurants or clubs and BECs

Step 5: Choose a Date and Time.

Whatever date and time you choose, remember - it won't work for everyone. So your best bet is to book a date and time that's best for the majority of your target market. Here are some general rules for business workshops:

Hold workshops Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday when businesspeople are most focused on work.

Check to make sure that there are no other major business, charity or social events on the day you hold your workshop.

Conduct half-day workshops in the morning. Be sure to allow for commuting time, and serving breakfast and beverages is always a good idea.

Hold evening workshops after dinner (6:30pm or later, unless you want to include food).

Consider holding multi-day workshops on weekends, especially if it's difficult for your target market to leave the office during the week.

Step 5: Market Your Workshop.

This step is critical. Even if you have done everything right up until this point, if you don't market your workshop correctly, you may not be successful.

There are a number of ways to market your workshop, including:

- E-mail to your list or a list you buy
- Newspaper advertising
- Direct mail
- Industry or business newsletter advertising
- Radio or TV
- Telephone calls
- Word-of-mouth - networking at events and asking others to market the workshop for you

Your marketing decisions should be based on your budget and what will reach your target market.

Advertising can include print, radio and TV. If your budget is limited, think of association newsletters or vertical media read by your target market.

Telephone calls take a great deal of time, so unless you know the people you are calling, this is a difficult method.

Direct mail can be effective if you are trying to reach a specific postcode or a certain demographic. However, it is easy to spend a lot of money on direct mail without guaranteed results. Direct mail works best if you have a strong offer with an

immediate call to action or have a well-known brand in the market, and have the resources to conduct follow-up calls to recipients.

Personally I happen to be a big fan of **internet and email advertising**, due to its low cost. Due to our SPAM and Privacy Laws in Australia you should only email market to people who have opted in to be contacted by you, however e-direct mails to your list, coupled with internet advertising on websites pertinent to your target market (with call to action and click through to event registration) can make for a cost-effective, results-orientated campaign.

Additional Revenue Streams From Your Workshop

In addition to charging for the workshop, you can bring in additional revenue by selling the following at your event:

- Books you have written
- Audio/MP3s you have recorded
- Videotapes or DVDs you have recorded

Other Important Items to Consider

Include handouts or binders in your workshop. This gives participants something tangible to take back. Make sure your name and contact information is on everything, for questions and/or potential future business.

Hand out an evaluation form at the end of the workshop. Ask for ratings on the workshop value and the facility where the workshop is being held, comments and interest in additional workshops.

Encourage networking among participants - this is an added benefit. Suggest that participants exchange business cards.

Hire or bring a helper from your business. This person will handle many of the day's details while you are able to focus on the participants.

Take pictures or videotape the event. Get permission from participants to use this on your website or in promotional materials.

Providing food and beverage, especially during lunch or dinner, can make or break your budget. Carefully consider these costs before including lunch or dinner in your event. If you ask people to go out to lunch and come back to your workshop, give them a list of local quick, inexpensive restaurants.

Chapter 12: Special Events

Events can be fun; but they can also be a lot of work. Let's focus on events in these categories:

- Fundraisers (primarily benefiting non-profits)
- Public relations/exposure (primarily benefiting businesses)

Fundraisers are often the primary means of funding non-profit activities, and are critical to a charity's success. Public relations events are held by businesses to promote goodwill, to introduce people to a product or service and to ultimately lead to sales.

Examples of Fundraisers:

- Dinner/dancing/silent and live auction
- Fashion shows
- Golf/tennis tournaments

Examples of Public Relations/Exposure Events:

- Grand Openings
- Contests
- Sponsoring charity events

Fundraisers

With so many different possibilities, just deciding on the type of event you want to run can be difficult. Here are some ideas:

Who is your target market? In order to generate as much income as possible, you should first consider your current donor base. Once someone has made a donation, they are more likely to donate in the future. Think about the demographics of your donors. Are they mostly women, with money to spend? If so, a fashion show might be an idea. Or are they men and women who often attend events? A dinner event could work. If you have young people and family donors, a walk-a-thon could be a good idea. If you live in a warm climate, it's likely you'll have lots of golfers or tennis players interested in a golf or tennis event. Once you have some ideas, discuss them with your board members or other donors. They will give you the feedback you need to make a decision.

How many volunteers can help you? Some events require much more work than others. If you have only a few volunteers, you may have to choose a smaller event. Or choose to involve yourself in a national fundraiser that the charity supports with marketing collateral like The Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea, Movember or the RSPCA's annual cupcake sale.

How much time do you have? Some events take much longer to implement than others. Successful large events usually have a planning horizon of six to twelve months. You should allow three to six months for smaller events. Many events are completed in shorter timeframes, but they create lots of stress and often lesser results. Once you decide on the type of event, here are some ways to increase the chances of success:

Choose a date and time that won't conflict with existing events.

Check social and organisation calendars for other events, then schedule yours at different times.

Choose an exciting venue or create a fun theme or unique event.

There are probably lots of charity events in your community. A typical event would be a dinner/dance. Other than interest in the charity itself, many people go to an event because it is unique or interesting. So having the event at an exclusive club or fancy hotel makes it more fun. Creating a fun theme or unique event also appeals to people (such as a casino night).

Put together a committee for your fundraiser. While you are responsible for the event in its entirety, it's critical to form a committee to help you implement the event. Committee members can be found by asking your Board members to be committee members, asking donors and friends of your non-profit to help, as well as your employees. The committee should meet regularly, at least once a month in the early stages of the event planning and more often near the time of the event.

Each committee member should then head up a subcommittee. Examples of subcommittees:

Auction, Volunteer, Smaller Gifts, Major Gifts, P.R, Transportation, Hotel, Dinner, Gift Bags, Sponsorships.

Subcommittee heads manage the details involved in their area. It doesn't mean that they do all the work. For instance, the auction subcommittee head would create a team to get auction items and would keep track of the items.

Create a project plan. There are lots of activities to complete to run an event. The event Chairperson should create a project plan to keep track of all activities. Each subcommittee head should report on the activities and the master project plan should be kept by the event owner to make sure nothing slips through the cracks.

Maximise publicity opportunities. Non-profits are often given free coverage in the media as a community service. Most daily newspapers have society sections that list non-profit events for free. Some local media will even trade you additional coverage if they are presented as a sponsor of the event, which helps them create goodwill in the community.

Send thank-you notes immediately to donors, sponsors and providers of products and services for your auction or event. Most non-profits don't do this. The ones that do make a great impression, and pave the way for continued donations in the future.

Public Relations/Exposure

Public relations events are held by businesses to promote goodwill, to expose people to a product or service and to ultimately lead to sales.

To determine the right event, consider these questions:

What is the purpose of your event? If you're new in town, a Grand Opening, to introduce you to the community, makes sense. If your goal is to get as much exposure as possible for your product or service, you might want to consider charity sponsorships or contests.

Who is your target market? Your goal should be to create an event that will be attended by your target market. For example, a beautician could offer a free 'Mom's pamper morning'.

What is your budget? Some events obviously cost more than others. Keep your budget in mind when planning your event, and the activities involved.

How much time do you have? Some events take much longer to implement than others. If you are able to partner with other organisations, or work with a group of people, your time commitment can be reduced significantly. However, you are still responsible for the event.

Once you decide on the type of event, here are some ways to increase the chances of success:

Allow enough time to plan and implement your event. This is often difficult. You should allow at least three to six months to plan and implement an event. Many events are completed in shorter timeframes, but they create lots of stress and often lesser results.

Create a project plan (see fundraisers).

Maximise publicity opportunities. Tying in an event with a charity, or involving local celebrities will help interest the media.

Launches or Openings

Plan the event on a day and time when your target market can attend.

If your target is families and children, consider a Saturday Grand Opening.

If your target is businesspeople, consider a weekday or weeknight.

Invite local business and community leaders. If you're a Chamber member, the leadership ought to attend. Don't forget politicians and civic leaders. Your business is supporting the community - the leaders of the community need to support your business.

Include lots of activities. To maximise your attendance, offer a variety of activities that appeal to your target market. For a Saturday family event, include food, games, face painting, and music. For a business event, include food and wine (at night) and entertainment. Including a celebrity will increase your attendance, as will tying in with a charity to donate a portion of your sales. If the event includes a charity tie-in, celebrities may be willing to show up for free or at a reduced rate. Check with local talent agencies or sports teams.

Offer giveaways.

Think about giving away something of value related to your business. This will also increase attendance.

Contests

Make sure the contest focuses on your business and target market. If you're a bakery, consider a bake-off. If you're a graphic designer, consider holding a contest for a free logo.

Invite local business and community leaders to be judges. These "local celebrities" help increase attendance. Including a local sports or entertainment celebrity as a judge is also a great idea.

Promote your contest before and after the event. Before the event, people want to read about and participate in the contest. After the event, they want to know the results.

Sponsoring Charity Events

Sponsor a charity event only if you believe in and have an interest in the charity. Sponsoring events just to look good doesn't work.

Look for non-monetary ways to be a sponsor. My graphic designer designs a local not-for-profit surf lifesaving newsletter. His company gets an advert in the newsletter and lots of exposure to local businesses.

Maximise your promotional efforts. Include giveaways in goodie bags that have your company name on them. Make sure your company's sponsorship appears in all ads, programs and press releases. Donate items for the live or silent auctions. Attend the event, along with other employees or friends.

Events can be exciting ways for you to raise money or increase exposure and sales. Planned and implemented correctly, they can help your non-profit or business achieve its goals.

Chapter 13 - Guest Columns

Guest columns are written by “experts” on a topic of interest to readers. Experts impart knowledge for free, and in return are given a byline so that they may be contacted.

Why This Is My Favorite P.R. Technique

This is a real win-win situation. You, the “expert” offer free information, to help readers. In return, you receive confirmation of your expertise by being a published expert. Plus you can also get free P.R. by offering a byline describing what you do, how to contact you and a call to action.

A **call to action**, mentioned in the Chapter on Speaking Engagements, is the most important part of a guest column. If possible, you want to give readers a “no-risk” way to continue to be in touch with you. They may not be sure they want to do business with you, but you should give them an offer they can’t refuse. So at the end of your column, along with your contact information, you want to include a call to action. For example, you can offer sign-up for a free newsletter at your website. Or you could offer a free Special Report. Or a special discount to readers that mention your column.

Who Accepts Guest Columns?

Many types of print and online publications accept Guest Columns. Here are some typical examples:

- Local business journals
- Association newsletters
- Local newspapers / Community newspapers
- Trade publications
- On-line newsletters
- Websites
- Blogs

What Do I Write About?

The best way to come up with ideas is to read several issues or guest columns in the publication. This will give you an idea of the types of topics that get published, as well as topics that have already been covered.

Always keep in mind your target audience. If you’re not sure, ask the Editor. When deciding on topics, think about what the readers would want to read about, not what you’d like to tell them about.

Here are possible examples:

- Local business journals (how to save money, how to increase profits, new business legislation)
- Association newsletters (industry changes, how to increase business, save money)
- Local newspapers / Community newspapers (consumer and business interest)
- Trade publications (legislation that affects the industry, solving problems specific to that industry)
- On-line newsletters (topics geared towards the main topic of the newsletter)
- On-line websites and blogs (same as on-line newsletters)

Make sure that you are providing solid information that will help the reader. If you provide an advertisement for your business instead, the editor won't allow your guest column to be published.

How Can I Increase the Chances of Getting My Guest Column Published?

Before you write your column, call or e-mail the editor to see if he/she is interested in your topic. If not, then you haven't wasted your time. However, even if he/she is interested, there is no guarantee it will be published. And even if it is, publication could be weeks or months away.

How Long Should My Column Be and How Should It Be Formatted?

These are questions you should ask the editor. They will give you a word count range, and a format (e-mail, MS Word attachment, etc.). Always include a copyright note at the bottom.

I Don't Think I'm a Good Writer. What Are My Options?

In addition to writing a guest column in paragraphs with text, you can also consider creating a list of tips in guest columns, such as "10 Little-Known Home Business Tax Breaks," "Top Five Time Management Secrets". These are often easier to write, and readers love tips.

If that doesn't appeal to you, you can choose to use other public relations tactics. Or, like many people, you can ask someone to "ghost-write" the column for you. Ghostwriting means that someone else writes the column for you but it comes out with your byline. Don't feel uncomfortable. It's done all the time. You may have a friend or relative willing to do this for you. Otherwise you can always hire a writer.

Chapter 14: E-Newsletters

These days we're all inundated with information. There isn't enough time in the day to keep up with new ideas to help our businesses. So we all need to get the most important information in the least amount of time. One way to do that is by reading concise newsletters with good information.

That's where your opportunity comes in. E-mail newsletters are a simple and inexpensive way to stay in touch with current and future clients. Every time you send out a newsletter, people are reminded about you and your services. And if your information is useful and relevant, it enhances your reputation even more.

By providing a free e-mail newsletter to your current clients and prospects, you are giving them information that they need in a format that's quick and easy to understand -- and it's free. At the same time, they're getting another update about you and your business - which can lead to sales.

How do you get started?

Step 1: Answer the Following Questions.

What topics will you cover? If you're lucky, you already have a niche that creates a newsletter focus for you. My accountant, for example, sends an enewsletter full of tax minimisation tips. Tips on increasing your client base are great for a marketing coach.

How often will you send out the newsletter? Typically, e-mail newsletters are sent out weekly, biweekly, or monthly. I don't recommend sending them less often, because the effectiveness is diminished. The key here is to be consistent. If you aren't sure you can commit to weekly or biweekly, commit to a monthly newsletter.

How long will your newsletter be? Our 'Write up' ezine offers between four and five stories, on average 1000 words in total, including headlines. Too long and your readers may lose interest. If you don't already receive *Write Up*, please sign up at <http://www.justgowrite.com.au>

Step 2: Determine the Content of Your Newsletter.

How will you present yourself as an expert, as well as provide information to readers? I include my "Welcome Note," a Feature Article, some news about a recent PR success or a testimonial, and a recommended product or service (usually my own).

Will you provide all the information, or will you allow others to participate? You want to be able to provide enough of your own information so that people regard you as an expert, but running guest columns or interviews offers great colour.

How will you provide information on your products and services? You need to make sure your newsletter is full of content, not just a sales piece. Yet if you're sending out a free newsletter, readers realize that there will be a sales message. Some ideas on including your sales message:

- Create a special offer (such as a discount on a product/service or a limited time)
- Announce the launch of a new product/service
- List places where you will be speaking (I often do a “Where’s Phil?” section)
- List places where you have received media coverage

Step 3: Determine the Format of Your Newsletter.

Will you include graphics / HTML or will it be straight text?

Personally I like graphic newsletters as it makes them more interesting. If you use an ezine creation program your subscribers can choose between HTML or Text. My current newsletter includes graphics, including my picture, as I believe it makes you more personable to your readers.

Do I do it myself or use an ezine creation program?

There are so many great, cost-effective ezine programs; I’d recommend you start with a professional template from the beginning. It makes you stand out.

For our Write Up newsletter we use a great service

(<http://emarketingsolutions.com.au/jgw.html>) and for our back-end emarketing we love <http://www.aweber.com>, as it manages our subscriber lists automatically.

Setting up and distributing an ezine is a whole new book in itself. I’m outlining some initial starting points here, but an award-winning recommendation is Alexander Brown’s *[‘Boost Business With Your Own eZine’](#)*. It’s a complete roadmap to success that shows you exactly how to publish and profit, step by step.

How Do I Get E-Mail Addresses?

This is obviously a critical part of the e-mail newsletter process. You never want to be seen as a spammer, so go for “opt-in” addresses, where people choose to subscribe.

The best way is to offer something for free if someone signs up for your newsletter. I offer free publicity tips that people can download, but you can offer anything from a free 1/2 hour consultation to a DVD or CD you can put in the mail.

Make sure you have the newsletter sign-up available on each page of your website so visitors have multiple opportunities to sign up.

Here are some additional ways to get newsletter subscribers:

- Ask all your friends, associates and clients if they would like to receive your free newsletter.
- At networking meetings, ask all new contacts if they would like to receive your free newsletter.
- Include on your business card and e-mail signature line information on how people can sign up for your free newsletter.
- Include on all guest columns how people can sign up for your free newsletter. Submit free guest columns to print and Web publications.

What am I going to write about each edition?

There are lots of ways to come up with great ideas and information. Here are some:
Think about questions you often receive from clients. Answering those questions, at least in part, is sure to be valuable to your readers.

Read industry / trade publications - both in print and online. The more you learn, the more information you can pass on to your readers.

Recycle previous guest columns and tips you have provided in other publications - my rule of thumb is an article should be used three times to get a return on the time I spend writing it.

Write down any ideas you have, as soon as you have them (that includes at night, before you go to sleep). As you continue writing the newsletter, ideas will come out of nowhere, and you need to capture them immediately. One column I wrote on customer service was inspired by a fantastic dining experience on my wedding anniversary!

Brainstorm with others. Two or more heads are always better than one, even when you're a really creative person. Remember, if you use someone else's information, you need to get that person's permission.

Additional Tips

Create a strong Subject Line for your newsletter. Make sure it grabs the attention of long-time and new readers.

Send a warm welcome message as soon as someone signs up. That way the subscriber is immediately welcomed even if your newsletter won't be coming out for a while.

Make it easy for readers to subscribe and unsubscribe. I include this information at the end of my newsletter. Why should you provide it? Some readers will pass along your newsletter to associates, and this way the new readers will know how to subscribe. Other readers will want to unsubscribe, either because they no longer need the information, or because they are changing e-mail addresses.

Make sure to include a copyright line at the end of your newsletter.

Chapter 15: Online PR and Blogging

Every day we learn something new about online P.R. techniques, so it would be impossible to include all of that information here. What I would like to do, however, is to give examples and possibilities, so you can determine which of these techniques will work for your business.

Website P.R.

Web sites are often overlooked as a P.R. tool.

At this point I'm assuming that everyone who is reading this has a website. If you don't, I strongly recommend getting one.

Here are the top ways that a website can help you with your public relations efforts:

- Allows the media to find you
- Allows prospects to find you
- Allows the media and prospects to learn more about you, thus increasing your credibility

There are four things every Web site should have:

1. All of your contact information, including e-mail and telephone number
2. A way to capture e-mail and/or mailing address of visitors to your website
3. Testimonials
4. Search Engine Optimisation

The Benefits of Driving Visitors to Your Web Site

Here is a summary of the benefits:

- Obtain e-mail addresses of visitors
- Get new prospects
- Provide information to prospects
- Allow journalists to find out more about you, so you can be a source for stories

The Importance of Search Engine Optimisation

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a way to format your website so that it comes up higher when people search for information on search engines. SEO is critical to your P.R. efforts, as it is a way for your site to get additional exposure. Organic rankings are free and come about through SEO efforts; they show up on the left side of a search engine, as opposed to paid ads that show up on the right side of a search engine.

There are three primary ways to make sure that your site is Search Engine-Optimised:

1. Provide great content.
2. Have many (legitimate) incoming links back to your site, proving that many other sites find your site valuable.
3. Include the right SEO code on your Web site.

Write Articles for E-zines (E-newsletters)

In addition to writing your own e-zine, you can help your business by contributing to others' e-zines. This has been a very effective P.R. vehicle for me and lots of others I know. The key is to find the right e-zines (complementary, not competitive with your business) and to write articles that provide the e-zine's readers with useful information.

Many of the articles I've written have come from previous newsletter tips I've given, or guest columns I've written. Sometimes I've added information to make my articles longer, and sometimes I've shortened or changed the information to appeal to that e-zine's target audience.

The best part about writing articles for other e-zines is the fact that you get to put a "resource box" at the end of your article. Just like at the end of a guest column, this allows you to promote yourself and your business, and offer a call to action (such as free information available at your Web site or sign up for your own free newsletter). Don't forget your copyright information.

Blog P.R.

What is a blog? A blog is a website that contains continually updated content in the form of "blog entries." The term blog is a shortened form of weblog or web log. Blogs use a conversational style. Often blogs focus on a particular "area of interest," such as fashion, technology, business or politics. Some blogs discuss personal experiences.

Why Write a Blog?

Some people write blogs just to be able to vent. In business, there are many reasons to write blogs:

- To create a connection with your target market
- To provide useful information to your market
- To let the public know your views on certain issues
- To give your side of the story if there was something negative about you or your business in the media
- To let your target market know about new products and services you are offering
- To promote others (who can also promote you)

The Blogging Process

I asked questions of Melinda Samson, the founder of Click Winning Content. According to Samson, weblogs, or blogs, enable companies to connect with an audience on a completely different level and, at the same time, develop an ongoing relationship with them that can't be achieved through traditional mediums. "We recommend a weblog publishing system and blogging strategy for businesses, which can create personal relationships with their audience, while establishing credibility and transparency through their brand." Melinda can be reached at <http://clickwinningcontent.com.au/>

Q: What platform do you recommend for blogging?

A: For installable software, I'd recommend WordPress. Both platforms are very mature, stable and offer a smorgasbord of third-party plug-ins. However, if you don't have a web server to hand, you should look at TypePad, WordPress.com (not to be confused with WordPress.org, which is an installable system) and Blogger, both of which are popular hosted models.

Q: What are the Top 5 things every blog needs?

A: 1. Use of tags or categories -- this allows content to be searched, discovered and retrieved easily. 2. RSS feeds -- These XML-based feeds allow blog content to be

subscribed and digested at the reader's convenience using "aggregator" or "feed reader" software. 3. Descriptive titles for entries -- these make the blog easier to index (by search engines) and also help readers find content. 4. A comments feature -- to enable a two-way dialogue with your audience. 5. Site analytics -- you want to monitor the behaviour of your visitors: who is visiting, how often and where from.

Q: How often do you need to put up blog entries? Do you need to do it every day?

A: You certainly don't need to post entries every day. However blogs are more effective when they're updated on a regular basis, as this makes them more discoverable by search engines (which favour frequently updated content) and keep your readers fed with fresh content. As a guide, 1-2 posts per week is good target to aim for, but if you don't have any content to blog about, then don't.

Mel's Top Ten Blog Writing Tips

Many people are afraid to get involved writing blogs, because of the time and the effort. You can always hire someone to do this for you, but blog writing is great if it comes directly from you. Here are Mel's tips

1. Keep the tone informal. By their nature, blogs lend themselves to a raw and personal tone, rather than a carefully crafted corporate press release that has been massaged by a copywriter.
2. Make sure you know what you're talking about. An effective blog should be authored by someone intimately involved with a product or topic, not the company PR agency, and it should sound intimate and authentic.
3. Think before you post. Often people share ideas and thoughts in the heat of emotion without thinking them through or before doing proper research. With blogging there's no such thing as "off the record," and as search engines cache page content on the blog, once published, is often irreversible.
4. Just because you have the ability to post an unlimited amount of content, doesn't mean you should. It's often easy to get carried away into a nonsensical stream of consciousness when blogging. Keep your conversations relevant and on-topic.
5. Don't use a blog as a sales or marketing channel to push your products or services. Your audience will see straight through this and you'll lose your blog credibility overnight.
6. Blogs generally provide a tight focus for a single audience, which builds relevance and readership. If you are targeting different audiences, you should consider running separate blogs for each audience.
7. Write open-ended entries, rather than closed to encourage comments from your audience, which in turn lets you nurture a relationship with them.
8. Always keep your content newsworthy and of interest to your audience. Don't blog for the sake of blogging, when you've really got nothing that's worth sharing.

9. Persevere. Even though the number of blogs created every day is booming, also prevalent is the number of blogs that lie dormant. Bloggers are quick to start conversations and equally quick to lose enthusiasm. Blogs don't create success overnight; on average a blog takes a minimum of six to nine months to establish itself and at least a year before yielding direct measurable benefits. The key to a successful blog is perseverance. Start a blog and your audience will come. Eventually.

10. While blogging can be effective, it can also be disruptive. Don't let this technology take over your life and make sure you don't forget your day job.

Chapter 16: Other Under-Utilised, Powerful P.R. Ideas

Offer your product or service for free. A client of mine, an award-winning chocolate manufacturer, always carries around chocolate “freckles” wherever he goes. Letting others sample his product is a great way to promote his business. If you provide a professional service, offer a special report or some of your time for free.

Co-market with complementary businesses. Share costs and prospect lists with a complementary, non-competing business. For instance, a regional winery I work with shares the cost of a direct mail postcard with a local cheese maker. Or put links to a complementary business site on your website, and ask other business to do the same.

Speak to groups about your product/service. Business, community and social groups often look for speakers. Many of these groups offer excellent opportunities for you to showcase your expertise while providing valuable information. Find groups that include your target market, and speak to them about something that interests them, and relates to your business.

Remember birthdays. I can think of only one company that sends me a birthday card every year. It’s a holistic centre that offers me a discount on services during the month of my birthday. And every year I use it. Everyone likes to be remembered on his or her special day.

Offer a money-back guarantee. This is extremely powerful and while most businesses are afraid that many people will ask for their money back, only a handful of people will ever take you up on this offer (unless, of course, you have a truly terrible product or service). Offering this guarantee lets others know you stand behind your product or service, and is basically a risk-free proposition, which is a strong motivator to buy.

Send handwritten thank-you notes. We live in an age of SMS and email. The handwritten note stands out amongst the digital pile, and shows you’ve taken time to think of your customer and client personally.

Operate a ‘Spirited Business’ and help others. Not just charity work, but being willing to help out, such as making recommendations and facilitating introductions. I’m a big believer in attracting what you put out.

Give out items with your company name and logo. I love refrigerator magnets and regularly use Post It notes with other businesses names on. I also give out pads of paper with my company name at the workshops I conduct. All of these giveaways provide continuous reminders to current and potential clients about you and your business.

Chapter 17: Crisis PR

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, negative events happen in your business that lead to bad P.R. The Institute for Crisis Management defines a crisis as "a significant business disruption, which stimulates extensive news media coverage. The resulting public scrutiny will affect the organisation's normal operations and also could have a political, legal, financial and governmental impact on its business."

Here are some quick tips to consider when handling or preparing for a crisis.

Be Swift, Direct, and Honest

It may sound strange, but the best-case scenario is when the company itself reports the bad news. This is proactive and prevents your company from being put in a weakened, defensive position.

Be realistic though. Not all bad news is worthy of proactive announcements to the public. In many cases, an issue can be effectively handled internally, with no impact on the business and no need for announcement and subsequent media hoopla. Make sure you know the difference between general, garden-variety bad news and a true corporate crisis.

If the crisis is not foreseen and you're forced into a reactive position, then react quickly. No issue skirting allowed. This head-in-the-sand approach is definitely not recommended.

Consider Your Internal Audience First

You owe it to your employees to hear it from you first. Tell them how you're going to deal with the bad news, and communicate regularly with them throughout the crisis.

Don't Let the Legal Department Make the Decisions

Sorry, but a lawyer's favorite phrase after "billable hours" is "no comment" -- the kiss of death in PR-speak.

Don't Pitch Fluff, Plan!

Trying to distract the media with some other, unrelated, lame story will make you look like an idiot. Don't do it.

Plan - in a time of crisis you want to know exactly where everyone is and what you're supposed to do. Grown-up companies educate their senior managers about the crisis plan, then insist that each executive keep a copy of the plan at home and at the office.

Take a look at [Northern Illinois University's great resource](#) on how to develop a crisis communications plan.

Got any PR questions?

I hope you enjoyed the first edition of the Do-It-Yourself PR & Publicity eKit. Please share with me your feedback or comments. I'd love to hear about your successes implementing your own publicity and PR.

Put Yourself Up In Lights!

