

Ten Tips on How to Get PR Results on a Budget

by Katja Schroeder

You know the market, but the market has yet to get to know you. At the same time, you can only dedicate limited time and resources to your marketing program. Public relations can be a powerful and efficient tool to reach your customers, if used smartly. Following are the top ten tips to get you started.

1. Focus on key influencer network: Scan the media, Technorati, Twitter, and industry events to identify the top influencers in your sector (media, bloggers, analysts, academics, etc.).
2. Compile corporate quick facts: Develop a one-page backgrounder on your business: who you are, and what you offer to whom. Include third party validation, such as awards and market stats, as available. Post it on your site and social media platforms like LinkedIn.
3. Develop a “story calendar”: Use tools like editorial calendars, the “Help a Reporter Out” newsletter, and seasonal events to pursue story opportunities on a month-by-month basis.
4. Keep releases for hard news only: Use GoogleAdwords’ search-based keyword tool to find the right words that improve your search engine pick up. Distribute releases to key stakeholder network using their preferred channel - email, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
5. Pre-pitch contributions: To save time, pre-pitch a byline idea to select reporters before writing the entire piece. Typically trade publications are more receptive to bylines than business publications.
6. Avoid buzzwords and tech lingo: Reporters scan pitches and releases for buzzwords, such as “leading”, “cutting-edge”, “optimize”, and “advanced”. Turn technical language into simple words that clearly explain the business value of your product or services.
7. Stay on message: If you get an interview, have your elevator pitch ready and stick to three key messages. Summarize your position again at the end of the interview.
8. There is no “off-the-record”: Even if a reporter promises to keep the conversation “off the record”, do not say anything that can compromise the company or upcoming news. Treat meetings with social media/bloggers like you are on TV.
9. Show market relevance: Scan your industry trade publications for trends that you can tie your business story to, such as green, aging population, health, or risk management/governance.
10. Repurpose results: Use Google Reader (or similar tools) to capture the coverage after interviews and releases. Re-use clips and quotes for marketing materials, presentations, and your Web site. Post great coverage pieces on Social Networks.