

mei-ster:
Suffix denoting
a professional
practitioner

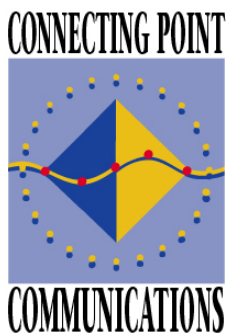
ProfitMeister

MAXIMIZING YOUR MARKETING MONEY

VOL. 9, #1

*"Very good
simple ideas that
are easy to
incorporate right
now"*

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Morethanorganized.net



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PR – Public Relations Puts Your Business on the Map for Free!

"All publicity is good, except an obituary notice," said Irish playwright Brendan Behan. Publicity, or "free" press, can be more valuable than some paid advertising campaigns because media coverage carries credibility. A spotlight on your business with an article, picture or news segment promotes you in many ways.

If you're in search of free publicity, start here. In less than five minutes, I'll show five sectors where you can start getting the word out.

Online Media Room

Across the country traditional media (newspapers, magazines, television and radio) have cut resources to save money. Today's reporters begin research online, and you can help them, by providing information they can use and access 24/7 on your website. An online media room, or press room, with background information and news about your company can increase your credibility with journalists and consumers. The Internet is critical to your successful publicity campaign.

Action items: Use an online media room to augment your publicity efforts by posting quality content to increase your online presence. See ProfitMeister's Special Reports or review newsletters from 2008 for more information.

Creative story ideas

Many people have a difficult time seeing what may be newsworthy about their own

business. If, for example, your business sponsors annual events of interest to the general or business community, you may have an easy time getting coverage around those events. But many small businesses don't have "built-in" or obvious story "angles." Try to see your business as an outsider might: What do people wonder about when they think of your business or how you do what you do? Is there a time of year when your expertise is of special interest?

Let's take the example of looking for a story idea a couple of months before Halloween. If you have a beauty salon, perhaps you could "pitch" being on a local morning TV show demonstrating how certain hair products can contribute to far-out costume ideas (rigid gels, temporary color rinses, etc.). It isn't the type of hair styling you normally do, but your salon would be mentioned and you could be seen as a fun, hip place to patronize. If you have a hardware store, perhaps you could pitch the local newspaper on a story about safety in working with leaf blowers, the best features of a new rake, etc.

Papers/business journals

List the major print publications in your market. The daily or weekly newspaper may come first to mind. In addition, look for alternative publications that publish weekly, monthly or quarterly. Pay special attention to sections featuring your industry. Notice which journalists write the kind of story that might feature your business, and review some of their past stories to get a feel for

Do your research.
Request an
editorial calendar.
Find your best
contact. Take note
of the specific
requirements for
each media.



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their style and the kinds of information they use.

Many cities have a business journal that targets upper management, business owners and professionals. These and other printed publications offer specific print coverage opportunities—including special sections, editorial calendars, letters to the editor, opinion columns or photo requests—in addition to general news and events coverage.

Local magazines

Magazines offer opportunities similar to those from newspaper for small businesses, except the magazine requires a longer “lead” time to get your information into print.

As you define those publications that have the most importance for your business, consider the magazines your customer reads most often: from news and business to home and fashion. Before you begin to submit information to a particular publication, do your homework and read several back issues. Note the reporters who most often write about subjects such as yours. Turn to the masthead and review the general rules for editorial content. Begin thinking about ideas that could be relevant for your business.

Action items for print: Request an editorial calendar (the publication’s plan for what will be covered in the coming year) for each publication on your target list or download the calendars from the Internet. The editorial calendar usually outlines special subjects for concentration. Identify your contact for the paper or magazine and research them online. Note the deadlines for information submission for each publication. Keep a log, including when you contacted each publication, what you discussed, and the outcome.

Local radio

Consider the programs your customers discuss. Many radio stations have morning shows featuring guest appearances. Local personalities may host a talk show or call-in that offers publicity opportunities. Take note of the time and requirements for each.

For example, one radio personality in our area offers a Friday night shout-out. From 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm, listeners can call in and say their spiel at no charge. If, however, the participant is unprepared, this host may cut them off. (NOTE: Because of interaction, the segment is quite entertaining.)

Local TV/cable shows

If your story impacts a lot of people, consider TV. Frequently, local stations allow promotion during particular segments of the morning show or a noon-time segment. Some stations may even produce a local entertainment feature that highlights local business. Discover the guidelines for coverage by calling stations in advance.

Action items for broadcast: Get the name of the TV newsroom assignment editor and re-confirm it each time you send information. Ask about public service announcements and observe the policy. Inquire about user-generated video. Check for the producer’s name and contact information. Keep a log of your contacts and document each outcome.

Summary

Your commitment to getting the word out with news and events at your firm will serve you well in the months ahead. Pick your outlets and begin using a mix of methods to distribute your information, and you’ll build coverage you can smile about. It may take more than one try, but I’m confident your persistence will pay off.