

Planning To Get Your Business In The NEWS

| By **Julie Morgan** |

The old adage that “failing to plan is planning to fail” is as true to a PR campaign as it is to business success. Having a clear idea of what you want to achieve, and a strategy to do so, is a must. But the key to a successful media campaign lies in the detail – knowing your ‘who, what, when, why, where and how’.

Hiring a PR agency or taking on the job of media relations yourself can be costly and time consuming, so it is important to be clear on your business objectives and what you would like to get out of your PR effort beyond free publicity. For example, are you trying to educate your market? Are you trying to position yourself as an expert or thought-leader? Are you trying to create awareness about your business among a particular segment and grow your customer database? Are you promoting a new product and trying to boost sales for Christmas? In short, who are you aiming to reach and what do you want them to know? The more specific your objectives are, the clearer your PR strategy will be.

Know What

The key to getting editorial coverage is being clear on what your news is. To appeal to a journalist, you have to think like one. They are after good content and stories. If you talk to an Australian editor, they will tell you consistently that the key to a good story is being able to provide an interesting narrative





that hooks your attention in the first paragraph and keeps it until the end. So brainstorm a few story ideas that are relevant to your business and test these out on your colleagues or friends. If your news is an announcement, you should be able to summarise it in a sentence or two.

Know When

Timing is crucial. When do you want your news to appear in the media? Answering this question is a good starting point when planning your media campaign, as it will help determine when you need to contact the media.

Remember to make the most of timely events and opportunities. For example, if you are about to launch a book about cricket, perhaps tie it into the start of the Ashes Series rather than the start of the ski season. And, if you want to promote your latest research, do not let it go stale – release it as soon as possible once you have your data collated.

Also think about how long you want your media campaign to run for. Do you have a strategic theme for the year that you want to pursue, or do you plan to have a number of different angles and announcements to make over the next few months?

Know How

This is about planning how you will get your news to the media. There are a few options. For example, will you stage a media launch event, produce a media kit or just email a media release?

A media launch event is worth considering if you have a major announcement to make and you can provide an impressive photo opportunity. Examples of media launches are grand or official openings, record-setting events, community initiatives and demonstrations. To get media to attend, you will need to explain what is going to happen at your event and the footage they can expect to capture on camera.

A media kit is your toolkit of media-ready information that journalists can use in a story about your business, product, event or service. It contains your press release, company and spokesperson biographies, product information and fact sheets, high-quality photographs and usually a few great case studies – customer success stories – and sample products. You can use this information when you are proactively pitching your story idea to the media or when you are responding to an interview request.

Physical media kits are great if you have a product to promote. Sending journalists a physical media kit lets them smell, touch, taste or experience your product, which certainly

helps to get a journalist's attention. Also, having a courier deliver something to a journalist is more likely to get noticed than an email, which can be easily missed or deleted. And more importantly, it creates an impression about your brand.

However, physical kits can be expensive so you need to ask yourself:

- Do you have the budget to create a physical kit? Creating a physical kit means you will need to cover the costs of product samples, printing and design, the packaging materials and postage or courier delivery charges
- How will it be presented? Will you use a stock-standard folder or create a hamper – or something much more innovative?
- How will it be delivered – will you post it or does it need a special courier? Remember that first impressions count, so be sure the presentation of your media kit and materials is impeccable. Do not risk it being damaged in transit. Some companies have hired promotional staff to make personal deliveries to the media. If sending perishable items to the media, be sure they are delivered promptly and handled properly
- Figure out who you will send it to. Do your research and get a firm idea of the number of journalists you want to send the media kit to – this will also help you determine the budget you need

Know Who

Who you have involved in your PR campaign can have a huge influence on the level of media interest you get. Needless to say, someone with an established media profile can be a big drawcard and lead to priceless publicity. But unless you have a personal relationship with the person, getting a celebrity to an event can set you back anywhere from \$4,000–9,000 – and upwards – in appearance fees. You can usually find out who the celebrity's management is by doing an online search. But a word of advice: if you choose to go down this path, be clear on what you want the

celebrity to do (such as be available for interviews, photography and so on) and be sure to check the fine print and ask about any other out-of-pocket or travel expenses you might be expected to cover. These can add up.

If you do not have the budget to involve a celebrity, think outside the square. Are you connected to any high-profile business people? Can you involve a school, a community group or a not-for-profit organisation? What about case studies – do you have any customers that might be willing to share their success stories with the media and be part of your campaign?

Know Where

This is about deciding whether your news is relevant to a local, a national or international audience – and if you are planning a media-launch event, thinking about its location. A general rule of thumb is that a venue should be within 30 minutes drive of the CBD/television studio and easy for the media to get to. The longer the drive, the better the news has to be for the media to justify a trip out to your location.

Spending time on planning media campaign is incredibly important to your PR success. So before you write your next press release, take a step back and think about your plan. **ABS**

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