

## Welcome to Taboo

This month we have been getting the low-down on the power of social media when it comes to doing your own PR.

*Herald Sun* Food editor and Melbourne editor of taste.com, Zoe Skewes lifts the lid on her use of Twitter, while cupcake wrapper guru Kathy Jackson, tells us how Facebook and blogs help stir up interest in her brand. We also leave you with some tips for PR success in the blogosphere.

If you think our monthly dose of Taboo is leaving you a bit short, why not [join our blog!](#) This week's topic is all about maximising your win, whether you have taken out an award or picked up a new contract, we share some insight into the value of promoting your success.

Enjoy!



## Time in lieu: 2 minutes with ...

**Zoe Skewes, Melbourne editor, taste.com**

### What is the focus of your publication?

Well, to state the obvious, taste is all about food. It appears as a lift-out in the *Herald Sun* every Tuesday and our aim is to give our readers all the information they need to shop and cook for their family and friends for all occasions. We also want to take them beyond their own kitchens to the city's best restaurants, cafes, supermarkets, providores and food events.

### What's the best part of your job?

That's easy. The best part of my job is being able to taste test all the brilliant food that is produced around Victoria and served in restaurants. On any given day my mail delivery could contain anything from in-season fruit to artisan chocolates, cheeses, cupcakes or preserves. I sample as much of it as I can and, if I like it, I write about it!

### Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn - are you a social media user?

I operate the @HeraldSunFood Twitter account and though I was a reluctant user at first, I've found it to be an invaluable tool in keeping up with restaurant and chef gossip and also to help me when I'm looking for various angles for stories. Lots of chefs use Twitter so it's a handy way to keep in touch with any changes to their menus or new projects they're working on.

### How is writing for online different to writing for print?

Online writing needs to be snappy, as the reader's attention span tends to be much shorter. The key to writing online is to get your audience in early with a strong lead and remember that large blocks of text are less effective than when they are in print.

**Complete this sentence "The best stories are...** the ones that are telling me something I didn't already know. When it comes to food journalism, they are the ones that make me want to immediately go out and try whatever restaurant or food product is being written about. The power of the restaurant critic should not be underestimated.

**Complete this sentence "The entrepreneur in you wishes..** MasterChef was my idea!

**Complete this sentence "The expression overused in interviews is...** any cliché.



And though I don't have a problem with it, a lot of people in the food industry hate the term "foodie".

**Complete this sentence "The best way to grab my attention is..."** in a succinct email with jpeg attachments that aren't so big they crash my inbox. The best way to lose my attention is to refer to me as the food editor of a rival publication. (You'd be surprised how often that happens!)

**Complete this sentence "The best piece of advice given to me is..."** put as much effort into Plan B as you do to Plan A. Chances are Plan B will be the one that comes to fruition.

### ***The cupcake gurus that have DIY publicity wrapped up!***

Kathy Jackson, mum and successful business owner, turned DIY publicist from The Cupcake Wrapper Co, shares her tips on PR success and rates social media highly.

Kathy and her partner, Natalie Olver, (pictured right to left) produce cupcake wrappers great for special celebrations, tea parties, birthdays or any time of the day.

**Why did you decide to do your own PR?** We had very limited funds to start our business so we didn't consider hiring a PR agency. I have a bit of experience in retail, working alongside some fantastic people in marketing departments, so I had an idea of what we needed to do. I enjoy writing and styling our product images so combined the two to come up with some good PR info to send out.

Magazines list their email contacts so I was able to send out about 20 press releases and we had a really good hit rate. With various social media platforms I was able to create a buzz about our cupcake wrappers before they had been launched, so we had customers and stockists lined up.



**Do you rely on PR or do you advertise as well?** We have only used PR to promote our business. Since launching in September 2009, we have received over 15 free editorial placements in magazines and/or newspaper lift-outs including *The Melbourne Weekly* and *The Herald Sun Home Magazine*, Channel 9 Postcards and the annual *Donna Hay Kids* magazine.

A lot of our soft PR is done online through Twitter, our Facebook page and our Blog. I cannot stress how important these are to the success of our business. Social media outlets have enabled us to showcase our new designs, post photos of how customers have used our cupcake wrappers, highlight new stockists, inform about events we are participating in. We get feedback from our customers on what colors or designs they want to see. Through Twitter, we've had all sorts of people contact us, from new stockists to magazine editors.

**What was the most important first step you took?** Before we launched, we had all our branding sorted. Our branding represents everything about our company. From the simple name, to our business card and blog design, it is very clear what our company stands for.

I used Twitter and our Blog to start the PR journey for us. Using image teasers of our samples, we were able to build up quite a following on Twitter even before the product was available for sale.

Once I sent out the press releases we did follow up phone calls to see what people thought. This was important to develop a relationship with media contacts too. We also gave away product samples to show people the designs and the quality of the wrappers.

**What media win has had the greatest impact on your business so far?** Our interview in the *Herald Sun Home* magazine was fantastic in getting our name and product out there. We picked up several new stockists and had lots of phone orders. The stockists that were featured, reported customers lining up at the shop door the following Monday to buy our cupcake wrappers!

**What is the number 1 tip you would give to others starting out to DIY PR?** I have two: 1) Know your brand and be consistent with it and 2) Utilise social media – Twitter, Facebook and Blog.

**Do you approach the media only when you have 'news' to tell?** I will send out an email when we have news for the media – a new cupcake wrapper design, an event we are participating in, or to alert them to our relevant designs for Mothers Day, Valentines, Christmas, Spring Racing Carnival etc. I also send a thank you email to each media contact who features us. Social media is a constant – we are on there all the time!

**What's the hardest part of DIY PR?** Updating all the social media pages takes time and you need to be creative thinking of ways to not be repetitive. You need to combine a bit of your personal stuff with your business things. Give it a soul. People appreciate hearing other things about you, so you are not just spruiking your wares all the time.

Also just knowing if people actually read the press releases you send out. I had a lovely meeting with *Sunday Age Magazine* Editor, Miranda Tay recently. She recognised our product when she saw it and as I introduced myself I said I hope you don't mind all the emails I send you. She said 'No, no we love them and we read them and we are dying to do a story on you!' It was a nice affirmation that I was on the right track with what I was doing!

**What one thing would make doing your own PR easier?** As I haven't trained in PR/Marketing, probably to know more about the 'tricks of the trade' that might help me along the way.

**What next for your PR plans?** We will be buying some media lists for US print media so we can tackle that big market. We have our sights set on a few targets, so having those contacts will hopefully make the task a bit easier.

The Cupcake Wrapper Co is now stocked in 43 outlets in Australia. Visit [www.thecupcakewrapperco.com.au](http://www.thecupcakewrapperco.com.au).

## Taboo or not Taboo?

### Social media – we love it

If you need a reason to get on-board with social media, read on. According to *The PR Report*, Australia leads the world in social media engagement. We have the highest global average for time spent per month engaging with social media – with an average seven hours each month dedicated to it. What makes us unique is that Australians join communities of interest such as parenting or sports sites for social media discussion and 62% of Australian internet users visited a message board or forum in 2009.

Meanwhile, LinkedIn has seen one of the fastest growth trends amongst social media sites in Australia, with unique audience numbers increasing by 99% from July 2009 to May 2010.

## Tips for starting out with social media

Still haven't started blogging or twittering about your business? It's important to do some homework first...just as dealing with traditional media requires some basic know-how, so to does connecting online using blogs and social media sites.

Here are PR Guru's eight tips for social media PR:

1. connect with your audience by writing with a 'personal' voice to make your brand or service real
2. re-think your key messages and reshape them in a conversational style so that you don't come across as a 'campaigner'.
3. avoid advertising driven messaging as this can be a turn off
4. be open and transparent: if someone challenges you or your brand, tell the truth, apologise if appropriate and rectify if necessary
5. to gain followers always consider how you can add value to the community you're talking with – what would they like that you have?
6. find others in your industry, as well as your competitors (here in Australia or overseas) and see what they are saying and how they are saying it
7. set up Google RSS feeds so that you can monitor online conversations about your organisation and others



twitter™

LinkedIn blog

8. have a response plan to activate should there be any criticism or negative feedback about your website, product, service or brand

## Debuts and departures

- Sarah Gawthorne is the new editor of *Bride to Be*.
- Kate Ashley-Griffiths is the editor of Melbourne's new free parenting magazine called *Nature* produced by Leader Community Newspaper distributed through child health centres, kinders and pharmacies.
- Michael Pickering is the new editor of *Men's Style*
- Sean Aylmer has replaced Damon Kitney as Australian Financial Review's business editor
- Chris Rickey has been appointed as news director for WIN Corp. Based in Wollongong, he is responsible for all WIN news
- New men's lifestyle website launched by Yahoo!7 – [banzai.com.au](http://banzai.com.au) features fitness, adventure and sport
- Rosanne Bayes is editor of *Move Sports Australia* magazine which launched this month. Targeting females aged 16-39 with a sport focus, it includes healthy recipes and sporty fashion.



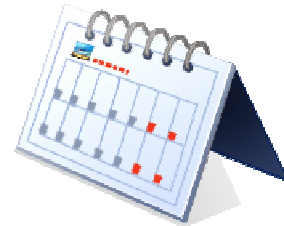
## Diary marker!

### Small Business BIG Marketing Expo

This action packed half-day event, showcases PR Guru alongside 30 other small businesses offering the latest marketing products and services. With free marketing advice, tips and valuable networking opportunities, this event is not to be missed.

**Date:** 26 August 2010, Time: 8am to 12pm, Venue Central Pier, Docklands, Melbourne

**Visit:** [www.business.vic.gov.au/homepage](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/homepage)



**About PR Guru:** PR Guru provides a press release writing service, up-to-date media database lists of Australian journalists and a DIY publicity guide. PR Guru is a Registered Consultancy Group Member of the Public Relations Institute of Australia. For more information visit [www.prguru.com.au](http://www.prguru.com.au) and follow us on Twitter [prguruau](https://twitter.com/prguruau)

*PR Guru's thought for the month:*  
It isn't what they say about you, it's what they  
whisper." **Errol Flynn**

