

Creating the Perfect PR Plan



HOW TO

MAKE IT HAPPEN

NOW

PLAN. REVIEW. EXECUTE.

Design and commit now.

Good intentions quickly fade as day-to-day responsibilities consume our time. No matter how great your product or service, unless you're top of mind for prospects and clients, reporters, and ultimately the public, if you're not proactively pursuing PR, you're letting valuable opportunities pass you by.

It's all about YOU.

Responding to an occasional call from a journalist is not enough.

To succeed with PR, you must reverse the process: it's your story, your theme, your time frame in publications you've selected.

Excellent media coverage is the result of developing and consistently communicating a focused message about you – a message about what your business has to offer and how it impacts the industry and community.



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Are you all on the same page?

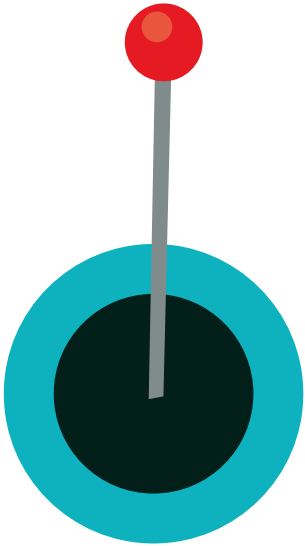
Public relations and marketing strategies must both address:

- Who are you trying to reach, and
- What do you want them to do?



FIRST THINGS FIRST

BEFORE YOU START



Look at individual successes to identify what you want to repeat.

Review

As you build your plan, start by reviewing the present situation.

- What did or didn't work in your media effort last year?
- Do you already have favorable reporter relationships – who are they, where and why?
- What story ideas did you pitch that yielded positive results?

Then what?

- Do you need be in front of the public more frequently or overcome any obstacles?
- Do you know exactly what you want to communicate and to whom?
- Are you trying to establish a brand, support your sales team, grow your business, introduce new products or services?

Build your PR plan around the answers to these questions.

SET GOALS, DEADLINES, RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific objectives will vary depending on where your company is in its lifecycle and your overall goal. Tie each to a time frame and appoint one responsible individual as its owner.

- Create and institutionalize a **consistent message** across management, sales and customer contact personnel.
- Ensure a cohesive **fit with marketing** materials.
- Gain **commitment** from your company spokespersons to participate, ensuring an understanding of frequency and expectations. Will they do phone interviews, TV appearances, or press conferences?
- Provide **media training** for company spokespersons to ensure they understand how to respond in a way that keeps the message focused on your organization.
- **Target reporters** with credibility, determining how many to target, how frequently to contact them and which media will most effectively reach your audience.
- Develop and retain **positive relationships** with existing reporters.
- **Target media** to maximize coverage by identifying specific TV programs, trade or retail magazines, newspapers and online opportunities such as webcasts.
- **Manage repurposing your media appearances and mentions** by developing a budget, providing sales training on how to effectively use them, working through compliance issues in advance, and posting all to your website to build credibility.

- Position yourself as a **thought-leader** by pursuing speaking and networking opportunities that fit your goal and schedule.
- Host **conference calls consistently**, pre-determining frequency and target audience.
- Attend and work **industry conferences** to gain additional exposure and insight from your peers and competitors.
- Host a **media event** with the primary objective of educating the media, public and local congress members on the importance of renewable energy and what role your business plays in the growth of the industry. Enlist the expertise of a PR firm to help you organize and publicize the event.
- Extend an invitation to key stakeholders and media to **tour your facility**. For most people, seeing is believing, so providing an inside look at how and why your company is making an impact on the industry and the economy can be an invaluable experience.
- Ramp up your **social media** efforts by engaging your clients and prospects through platforms like LinkedIn or Twitter.
- Gain **local buy-in** by keeping your community up-to-date on the happenings of your business and industry by posting updates to your website and submitting press releases to your local media.

Sounds simple enough, but what are the components of a sound PR plan?

Align your PR plan with the strategic goals and marketing objectives of your company.

Include a series of related objectives that are specific and actionable. One individual, who certainly can call on team members or outside resources, must be accountable to management for each objective. And, each objective must have a time frame for completion.

Your plan can only succeed if you have commitment from top management, sales and marketing.



Positive media coverage on a regular basis can often be the silver bullet in your marketing effort.

But, you won't get results overnight.

Be patient, and take a disciplined and structured approach to getting your story in the hands of the right reporters.

BE PROACTIVE

PITCH YOUR STORY

Take a proactive approach rather than a reactive one—pitch your story to the media.

Seek out and build relationships with reporters to cover your story.

To give you a jump start, here's six tips on putting together a good media pitch and getting it in the hands of reporters.



Is your media relations strategy issuing press releases and hoping reporters will call?

Then, you're probably not getting the media attention you deserve!

6 TIPS

Use a pitch to catch attention.

A pitch is what you use to catch the attention of a reporter, blogger or producer to try and get them interested in covering your story. Usually it is sent by email.

A pitch is different from a press release because it is shorter, offers a story idea rather than the story itself, and is sent to a specific journalist rather than in a blast email or via an online press distribution service.

Here are some tips on making a quality pitch:

1

Make it newsworthy – Ask yourself where the news hook is in your story and what makes it interesting to the hundreds of readers or viewers that will see it.

Newsworthy often means timely, unique, helpful, or something that uncovers a larger trend. Recently, the media has deemed Britain's exit from the EU, US foreign policy, and the upcoming election as newsworthy topics.

2

Keep it short – Reporters work on tight deadlines and receive hundreds of emails a day.

Make your pitch catchy and relevant to the reporter you are reaching out to in the first few lines. Try not to write a pitch that is longer than 2 paragraphs.

3

Keep it simple – Avoid using industry jargon or attempting to describe your technology.

The important thing is to catch the reporter's interest with a news angle so that they will contact you for more information.

4

Reach out to relevant reporters – Build your reporter database over time and make an effort to know what they like to write about.

Remember, you are sending your pitch to a select group of reporters that you feel will be interested in your story. Send emails out individually, not to multiple reporters at once.

5

Pick up the phone – Some people find the thought of phoning a reporter intimidating, but a brief and courteous phone call to ask if they received your email is a good way to follow up.

By making a phone call you may be able to influence the upcoming story or spark interest in a new one.

6

Meet with reporters – Just like the sales process, there is no substitute for in-person meetings.

It lets reporters know that you value your relationship with them and keeps you at the front of their mind when they are looking for sources. Know your company's story, including what makes you different, and practice rehearsing it in a simple and repeatable way.

Earning recognition attracts investors and customers, elevates your image, and builds your brand at a fraction of the cost of most other marketing efforts.

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Then give your spokespeople the support they need with SunStar's media training workshops, ongoing interview coaching and full complement of traditional and digital marketing services.

