

7 Insider Secrets for Getting the Free Publicity You Deserve **By Caryn Amster, Marketing Coach-sultant™**

People buy people. They do business with someone familiar with a good reputation. Next to a direct referral, public relations is the most reliable way to transmit this message. And it can be most effectively targeted to three audiences, your current customers, your community and the media.

People have a built in “[believability alarm](#)”. They are not always sure ads are telling the truth. Public relations do not set off the alarm.

Think you can't compete in a crowded world with millions of advertising messages? Sure you need money to promote your business. You can spend \$320 for an ad in a local paper or \$3,200 for a billboard on a highway. Or, with public relations, you can spend 32 cents for a postage stamp. And, you not only save money, but [you get the implied endorsement of the media](#).

Secret #1: Public Relations Is An Essential Part Of Your Marketing Plan!

You need promotion, and the media needs your news. The enormous number of new players in the media market is hungry for ideas. Your business is interesting and the media has lots of time, opportunity and space to fill. So... make it a monthly part of your marketing plan. Once a month, look into your business and see what will attract media attention. Relate something unique about your business to something people want to know.

Secret #2: Look For The Hook!

Just like Peter Pan, you have to find the “hook”. Find the hook by “worming” your way through your daily business life. Do you:

- Have a new product or service
- Offer improved services
- Plan a free even that calls attention to what you do
- Offer a donation to a charity for every sale you make
- Submit a story about a great example of customer service
- Trends... the media loves trends

Knowing the headlines and how they impact your town, your business and yourself will help you create a great “hook”. Maybe the New York Times doesn't care about your sidewalk sale, but it may care about a trend in your business. And you are the expert on that.

Secret #3: The WOW Factor!

Create an attention-grabbing headline that makes YOU want to read more. Write the release. Show it to friends and business associates and see how interested they are. If they say it's just ok, maybe it's not what you want. If they say WOW, you know it's a winner.

Secret #4: The Right Form!

Using the right form is the key to being noticed. Be brief, factual and to the point. Remember to:

- Provide the contact person's name and number
- Mention the 5 W's and the H (when, where, why, what, who and how) in the first paragraph
- Intrigue them. As with advertising, you only have a few seconds to get their attention
- [Return media calls immediately so you won't miss the deadline.](#)

If you think you REALLY have a great story, follow up with a phone call. Ask if they are on a deadline. Often they will let you know if you are pitching the story correctly. Communication builds rapport.

Consultants! You have a special goal! With public relations, you need to get your card into the media's Rolodex. When they need an expert on your topic, they'll call you.

Secret #5: The Write Stuff!

Before you write, make sure your business can handle success. It doesn't help when you have a feature story in the Sunday paper and nobody knowledgeable to answer questions on Monday morning.

When you get the free publicity, you need to have the products or services ready to go. If you disappoint the audience, you will rarely have another chance!

Secret #6: Get More Bang For Your 34 Cents!

Public relations is cheaper than advertising for drawing attention and is usually more relevant. Consider the following tips.

- Release to trade and consumer publications
- Consider a non-profit link for publicity like sponsoring a charity event
- Expand the impact of a single article by creating reprints. Include the masthead of the publication
- Send your article or tape of your interview to customers and potentials

Secret #7: Consider Other Avenues!

There are many forms of publicity. How much would you spend to promote (advertise) your business? Public relations stories have a longer life than most ads so consider the following.

- Include a reprint in your next brochure or mailing
- Include an excerpt from the article in your newsletter or ad
- Make a blow-up of your article to use at your trade show booth
- Give reprints to your sales staff
- Add articles and taped interviews to your next press kit
- Create articles with tips from you ...the expert on your area of expertise. Write an article or give a talk offering FREE information as a “bounce back”. Of the 300,000 people who see or hear you, 500 are looking for your subject. **THESE ARE YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS!**

There are hundreds of secrets. But it's no secret that **the first two letters in the PROFIT are PR!**

“My goal is to consistently give business owners the best and latest tips, tricks and information on marketing their business,” says Caryn. Custom Marketing Associates, started in 1988, is a business-to-business marketing, advertising and public relations firm located in Elk Grove, Illinois. Amster's second business, The Marketing Coaches, specializing in speaking, training and consulting on marketing, direct mail, customer service and trade show issues, was started in 1990. For information, contact Caryn at (847) 895-6449, e-mail Caryn@MarketingCoaches.com and see the site at www.MarketingCoaches.com.

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