

It's No Secret That the First 2 Letters of the Word Profit Are PR!

By Caryn Amster

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People buy people. They do business with someone familiar who has a good reputation. Next to a direct referral, public relations is the most reliable way to transmit this message. People have a built in "believability alarm." They are not always sure ads are telling the truth. But public relations do not set off the alarm. And it can be most effectively targeted to three audiences: your current customers, your community and the media.

Sure you need money to promote your business. You can spend \$320 for an ad in a local paper or \$3200 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 also get the implied endorsement of the media.

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. 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.

LOOK FOR THE HOOK! Just like Peter Pan, you have to find the "hook". Look at your daily business life. Do you:

- Have a new product or service
- Offer improved service
- Plan a free event 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. Become an authority.

USE THE RIGHT FORM. In sending your press release to trade and consumer publications be sure to:

- Be brief, factual and to the point
- Provide the contact person's name and number
- Mention the 5 W's and the H (when, where, why, what, who and how)
- Intrigue them. As with advertising, you only have a few seconds to get their attention
- Return media calls immediately so you won't miss a deadline
- **CONSULTANTS!** You have a special goal! With public relations, you need to get a card into the media's Rolodex. When they need an expert on your topic, they'll call you.

GETTING MORE BANG

- Put a business card in all correspondence, even bills

- Expand the impact of an article by creating reprints—include publication masthead
- Write a book or an article yourself
- Sponsor or co-sponsor civic or charitable events
- Be a guest speaker or presenter
- Once you have their attention, STAY IN TOUCH

Before you attempt a public relations campaign, make sure your business can handle success. When you get free publicity, you need to have the products or services ready to go. If you disappoint the audience, you will rarely have another chance!

Should you hire a professional publicist? Lack of time, contacts and determination are good reasons for a company to hire an agency. [Hiring a professional may be cheaper than you think.](#)

“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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