

How Can Publicity Increase MY Profitability?

By Nancy J. Wintner

Question: *Why should I write news releases or use other tactics to get my company in the news?*

Answer: In today's competitive marketplace, small businesses cannot afford to stay in the background. They must be constantly visible to survive and be top of mind to attract new clients/customers. One strategy to achieve this objective is to be prominently visible in the media. In fact, publicity can help increase your company's bottom line over the long term.

How so, you ask? Here are five reasons:

1. Publicity Can Sell Your Products and Services. A newspaper or television story that promotes the benefits of your product or service can increase your visibility and lead to cash registers ringing and phone orders tripling. Consider the times you've read the restaurant review in the paper or saw the new hot toy for Christmas on TV that sent you rushing to the new restaurant down the street or to Best Buy to grab that electronic gizmo for your son. A story in the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* or *Pittsburgh Business Times*, for example, can cause your phone to ring off the hook and clog your e-mails with inquiries.

2. Publicity Can Generate Revenue. If you write and publish articles about your company, these stories can be turned into reprints or pamphlets and distributed to prospects. Articles, or even "sound bites" from radio and television

interviews, can also entice prospects in new business presentations and reinforce the messages you want to communicate. Marketed properly, publicity can encourage qualified leads and attract new clients/customers to your door.

3. Editorial Coverage is Free. For the most part, news and feature coverage is free where advertising requires purchasing time and space. In fact, a favorable mention in a business column or feature article can capture more attention and engage your audience in the story whereas ads can be skipped ignored or forgotten. The more media attention, the more likely your company will be ingrained in the minds of prospects.

4. Media Exposure = Enhanced Credibility. In addition to increasing visibility and saving thousands of dollars on advertising, media coverage enhances your credibility. Positive and consistent media exposure boosts the perceived value of your company's offerings and legitimizes your business to its target audience. The more credibility, the more likely your company will attract "buyers." Research shows that individuals are more likely to believe what they read or hear in the news versus paid advertising. In short, the media serves as third party credibility and implies objectivity to your audience.



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5. You Can Soar Above Your Competition. Publicity offers three main benefits. It can: help distinguish your company from the look alike competition; carry your company's message directly to your target audience and illustrate why clients/customers should buy from you. The more times your company is mentioned, the more likely it will be remembered. In summary, initiating positive media coverage makes good business sense. A strong, well thought out publicity program can be financially rewarding and complement your existing marketing efforts. The results can take your company in a direction beyond what you ever imagined and be a great return on your time and energy investment. ▼

Editor's Note: Nancy J. Wintner, APR, owner, GWN Consultants, helps small businesses and professional service providers attract new clients. She can be reached via e-mail, njwgn@earthlink.net. *Dynamic Business* readers looking for tips on how to implement this advice should consider attending our workshop "Meet the Press: The Secret to Getting Your Business in the News" on Tuesday, June 5, 2007. Refer to the Event Calendar insert in this issue for complete details and register online at www.smc.org.

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