



Marketing Messages

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Creating media buzz about business can pay dividends

It seems these days we are inundated with advertising at every turn. Companies spend more and more on marketing and we pay less and less attention as competition for our interest elevates. So how do you get better results from your marketing? You get people to talk about your stuff. You generate word of mouth. You get free publicity in the media. You get buzz. Generating positive word of mouth can be one of the single most effective marketing tools you have at your disposal. Because word of mouth and generating media coverage comes via a third party, it is seen as authentic. It also tends to get remembered. Plus it's free. What could possibly be better?

Although it is the least expensive form of advertising, it is also the most time consuming. And because you can't buy it, you have little control over the accuracy of what is said or written.

To get publicity you must have the imagination to produce news monthly and publicize it. You must have influential media contacts to offer news to, and you need to nurture these contacts and keep them current. And finally you must have the persistence to follow things through in order to get the news coverage you are looking for. So how do you get news? How do you create buzz? Here are some ideas.

1. Announce something new about your business.
2. Explain something unique or unusual about your business.
3. Announce an upcoming event.
4. Connect your offering to what's in the news right now.
5. Give survey results.
6. Leverage a holiday or special event.
7. Connect your business to a current trend.
8. Make a controversial claim (and be able to back it up!)
9. Make a humorous announcement
10. Stage an event

You will need to put together a press kit for the media. It should include:

1. Your one page release
2. A short note about why you're sending the press kit.
3. Photo with caption.
4. Make your press kit an attractive folder.
5. Include a one sheet brief about your company and background.
6. Attach business card and contact information.

And remember, if you're sending a press release by email, put the release within the content of the email, not as an attachment. Unsolicited attachments are less likely to be opened, and may be feared to contain viruses. Make your subject heading catchy and avoid words or phrases used in spam, which may cause your message to be filtered out.

If you are fortunate enough to be interviewed, you need to be prepared.

1. Practice. Better yet, get coaching.
2. Know what makes you/your business different.
3. Practice communicating your message.
4. Identify three main points, and always bring questions back to these points.

One local business that has harnessed the power of capturing media and creating buzz is **Executive Search Dating**. Billing themselves the "Dating Headhunters", services are aimed at busy professionals. While matching agents interview clients to create a profile, the "Cupid Strike Force" patrols events throughout the city proactively searching for the perfect match. Thorough screening and all dating arrangements as well as follow up and refinement of matches make for an appealing package for busy attractive professional singles.

After having limited success with traditional paid advertising, company founder and **President Paddi Rice**, embarked on extensive efforts to create word of mouth and buzz about his company's services. One stunt saw them place valuables such as Rolex watches and luxury car keys in bear traps at strategic places in Vancouver's financial district. Signs exclaiming "Leave the hunting to us" were placed close by. The guerilla campaign, the brainchild of Rethink, garnered them coverage in Metro and Marketing Magazine. By using their "Cupid Strike force" to interview people about dating in Vancouver, they have been able to generate their own research which has helped them get coverage with **CBC am, News 1130am**, and the **94.5fm The Beat, The Vancouver Sun, the Globe and Mail, Business in Vancouver, Global TV and A Channel**. The Beat featured a promotion called "Shred your X" where they set up a paper shredder on Robson Street. Listeners were invited to shred photos and letters in exchange for a first date with Executive Search Dating. Paddi Rice explains that there are two important aspects to media. The first is getting it regularly to keep a presence out there. The second is making sure people see their media. The company actively promotes all coverage received on their website. Paddi also recognized the benefits of professional media coaching which he received from Optimedia. He interviews well.

Harnessing a buzz is hard work. But getting people to talk about your stuff is worth it. And as the media universe gets increasingly cluttered, it's an authentic way to cut through and be heard.

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