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## GETTING FREE PUBLICITY FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Advertising is telling the world how great you are, while publicity is having others tell the world how great you are. Companies and organizations that understand the importance of publicity are generally more successful than those who use advertising alone to reach their target audiences.

Newspapers, magazines and radio and television news programs are filled with stories about businesses and organizations. Those who know how to present materials professionally to the right people will get media coverage for free, while those who don't understand how publicity works have to rely on large advertising budgets to reach their audiences, usually with less impressive results.

"If you can get a news organization to report about your event or praise something you're doing, you have gained an enormous amount of credibility that simply couldn't be generated through paid advertising," said David Forman, a public relations veteran and author of "Publicity Professor," a workbook that teaches business owners how to get free news coverage.

The first step in reaching out to media professionals is to create an appealing press release. Its main purpose is to get an editor or producer interested in what you have to say or in what you are doing. It should contain enough information, specifics and quotes that a writer can craft a story from it without ever having to call you.

A media alert is another tool for getting press coverage. Its purpose is to give news assignment desks the specifics about an event in a way that entices editors or television news directors to send a reporter or camera crew.

There are dozens of other ways to get news coverage, such as placing feature stories or writing pitch letters offering your expertise in a subject for quotes or on-air interviews.

Forman says you don't have to hire outside help to get publicity.

"Nobody knows your business like you do," Forman said. "You simply have to reach the appropriate person with your message, in a format that media professionals expect."

Using real-world examples, "Publicity Professor" shows you how to give editors and producers exactly what they're looking for to get your story covered for free.

The guidebook includes easy-to-follow templates of press releases, media alerts, feature stories and pitch letters; suggestions on creating newsworthy special events and awards programs; and resources for contacting local, regional and national media.

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