



THE MOST OVERLOOKED FREE ADVERTISING IN THE WORLD-WIDE UNIVERSE

Why would anyone in their right mind pass up an opportunity for free advertising? The answer is, you shouldn't. Never.

That's why you need to learn the careful art of press release writing and submission.

The press release is the perfect tool for free publicity. Most people know that non-profit and community service organizations are capable of getting free publicity by using this tool. But can it be used for businesses that operate for profit? Sure can.

If written the right way and promoting the proper angle, a press release can get your business in the spotlight for some free publicity. But you've got to keep a few things in mind.

First, no media outlet is going to advertise your weekend sale or special one-time low prices on out-of-date widgets. If you are seeking publicity for your business because you want to rake in some quick cash next weekend, don't waste your time. You won't get the publicity you're looking for.

However, if you are the proud sponsor of a community event where members of the public are invited then you could get some free publicity. There are all kinds of creative ways to make this work.

For instance, suppose the new and outrageous Springling Sisters Carnival is coming to town. They are going to use your storefront parking lot to set up for entertainment. Normally, your business is closed on weekends and the carnival is only going to operate on Saturday and Sunday. What a great opportunity to capitalize!

That is one golden opportunity for a press release. But don't mention your business. Just promote the carnival and be sure to give the address where the carnival will be located - the address of your business, which you won't mention by name. People who read about the carnival in the newspaper or hear it on the radio will be looking for your address. When they find it, they will find your business open on days it is normally not open.

Here's what you do on Saturday and Sunday when the carnival is in town. Hire a clown or someone who represents a mascot for your business. Have them stand at the entrance of the carnival or beside the street where traffic is passing by. They should be holding a sign advertising your business is open or passing out flyers and brochures to carnival-goers inviting them to your store after they have enjoyed the entertainment. Promote it as a special Carnival Day Super Saver Day, or a similar special sale day. People will love it.

Your store can be promoted this way through any number of events. Suppose you hire a local celebrity to visit your store on a certain day. Send a press release stating the celebrity will be at your store (this time you can mention it by name) on that day at a specific time. Because your event is promoting the celebrity, not your business, and it's a free event that anyone can attend, it is likely that local news media will pick it up.

One other way you can get free publicity for your business is to host a free seminar where nothing will be sold. The idea is to give people free information they can use in their businesses or private lives. Suppose you run a local automotive shop. You can give a free seminar teaching women and new drivers how to do a tune up. Since you are not selling your services at the seminar this is a great opportunity to promote your business in the community without advertising.

Also, you can use legislative issues as a tool for free publicity. What if your state passes a new law regarding emissions testing. Write a press release where the legislation is the focus of the article. Don't talk about your business. Instead, discuss how the legislation will effect people in your community. Then, throw in a quote from the owner or manager of your business. You can include the person's title and the business name since you are writing a news story and position the person quoted as an expert on the subject. Voila! Free publicity.

It is important that you focus on an event or special moment that will appeal to a wide variety of people and involves some sort of community service or popular interest. It shouldn't be self-serving. You are giving to the community and you want the world to know. This is your one chance to shine.

Be sure to send the press release to as many media outlets (radio, television, print and Internet) as you can find contact information for. It is best if you send it to a specific editor by name rather than just "editor" or "producer." Also, learn to write in journalistic style with all the pertinent information (who, what, when, where, why and how) in the first two or three paragraphs. Write in an inverted pyramid style with the most important information up front. That way, if the media company only has space for so much content they will use the most important information because they always cut from the bottom.

Press releases can be used to promote your business in a variety of ways, to include special community events, charitable sponsorships, joint ventures with government and community service organizations, celebrity appearances and holiday events that involve a wide berth of community personalities and agencies. Be creative and remember that your goal is to promote someone or something else. You should be in the background as much as possible, but visible. And that is how you can promote your business through free publicity using the most overlooked free advertising tool in the world-wide universe.

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