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## PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES FOR MANUFACTURERS AND INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIERS

By Conrad Bailey

What you are about to read here is not what you would expect to learn about marketing industrial products via public relations, or what you would normally find from other PR sources. The reason is because the majority of public relations articles you'll find online are nothing more than hidden sales pitches from PR firms that offer advice based on what's best for their agency - and not the client. You know the ones - that always end their article with an offer to purchase or learn more about their promotional services. In this article you'll get none of that.

### Don't Outsource Your Public Relations

Writing and submitting press releases and stories to the media is one of the most cost effective ways to promote your industrial products. However, unless your company has deep pockets and money to throw away, writing and distributing press releases is much more cost-effective when you do it yourself. Forget traditional PR firms - they charge ridiculous fees just to write and submit your press release. You'll get much better results by using the services and tools of online companies like PR Web and PR Leap to distribute your press releases to your target media. In result you can generate some relevant and often permanent back links to your Web site. An additional benefit that can drive traffic to your site for months or even years.

### Reaching A More Highly Targeted Audience

Services like PR Web are excellent for promoting your company and products to mass media. But remember, the biggest benefit comes not from the distribution of those press releases, but when editors or producers that see your press release contact you to follow-up on your story for their publication or station. That is where the most exposure will be generated.

In addition to using services like PR Web, you can and should submit your press release directly to the most relevant media sources you can find, such as trade publications that are read by your target audience. But do it yourself - don't waste your money on PR firms that claim to specialize in the trade press. All they are actually doing is snail mailing your press release to trade magazines or journals that you can easily find yourself using media directories like Gebbie Press. Besides, there are probably no more than 5 to 10 trade publications that are ideal for your press release. So don't pay some PR firm thousands of dollars to submit your press release to hundreds of magazines when only a handful may be interested in publishing it.

### Writing A Good Press Release

Writing a good press release is not that difficult if you focus on what makes your story newsworthy. Just ignore the marketing hype and write about your product's features, user benefits and what makes it different (superior) than similar products in the marketplace. That is what makes a press release newsworthy and more likely to be published by the media you are targeting.

Some public relations companies will charge up to \$250 or more to write a press release. You can find freelancers online or at local colleges that will do it for much less. Still, you'll always get better results by writing it yourself. After all, if you're the person responsible for public relations at your company, then you know more about your products and the benefits they offer than anyone else. So doesn't it make sense that you are the most qualified person to write a solid press release?

One of the best ways to learn how to write a powerful press release is to know everything there is to know about your product and the exact market you are targeting. Secondly, analyze the press releases your competitors are putting out on the Web. Make sure your release indicates unique benefits such as the technical edge your product has in the marketplace... since new technology is always a newsworthy topic. Lastly, make sure to include a good headline, such as one that might propose a solution, build curiosity or express some kind of benefit.

### Distributing Your Press Releases

Distributing your press releases is not a matter of what delivery method you prefer, but rather which method the editor prefers. There are editors that want it sent by email, while others prefer it's delivered by fax or snail mail. If you're not sure, give them a call and find out which delivery method and format they prefer, if any. It makes a good impression and can also make a significant difference whether it gets published or not.

Whatever you do, you should never mass mail, fax blast or bulk email your press releases. I guarantee you'll be wasting serious money and a lot of time. For now on, focus on fewer but more relevant media sources. It's easier and much more productive to work with 10 to 50 solid media sources that serve your target market.

### Some Final Words

If there is one tip in this article you remember and follow, make it this. The need to gain a competitive edge through public relations is greater now than in any other time in history. Due to the Internet, promoting your company and products has never been easier or faster than it is right now. The key is to remember that when it comes to public relations, people's needs will always change, so you must aim well ahead of the target to hit it.