

The **Ultimate Guide** to **DIY Publicity**



Wendy Parker

Parker Public Relations

The **Ultimate Guide** to **DIY Publicity**

- 1 Why publicity?
 - 2 How do I get started?
 - 3 What makes a great media story?
 - 4 How should I communicate my stories to the media?
 - 5 How should I engage with the media?
 - 6 What about my key messages?
 - 7 How should I prepare for a media interview?
 - 8 How quickly can I expect coverage?
 - 9 How do I measure my media success?
 - 10 How do I get maximum bang for my publicity buck?
- In conclusion - To do or not to do?

1 Why Publicity



I thought I'd start off my book by addressing that really big elephant currently residing in offices and corporate boardrooms round the world: with the upsurge of social media, blogging and content marketing, has traditional media – aka publicity – outlived its usefulness?

Should businesses abandon it in their droves and focus exclusively on generating their own online content?

My answer is a categorical 'No'.

It still remains one of the most effective tools in any public relations and marketing war chest.

In fact most marketing gurus admit that 'earned media' (that trendy new term for good ol' fashioned publicity) is the holy grail of all marketing activity.

Pretty much it gives you:

Instant status

While it takes time to build online followers and connections, if done well, coverage in traditional media can build your reputation overnight. Securing publicity in a key mainstream or specialist masthead or scoring an interview on prime-time television or drive-time radio, carries significantly more clout than being interviewed for web TV or writing a blog. In fact many a savvy PR understands the importance of kicking off a client's communications and marketing campaign with garnering some high profile publicity.

"Publicity (earned media) still remains one of the most effective tools in any public relations and marketing war chest."

Third party endorsement

While attracting the attention of key social media influencers and securing online endorsement is vital to building a business's reputation and credibility, third party endorsement from the media carries significantly more weight. Over the years I have seen many a client move from relative obscurity to high visibility thanks to a sustained media campaign positioning them as experts in their field. Because people like working with experts, this has had a positive impact on growing their client base, garnering them valuable relationships and even attracting the attention of regulators and legislators.

Media still highly recognizable to most

Regardless of whether or not they consume traditional media, the average person immediately recognizes a city's newspapers, radio stations and television. The same is less unlikely for even the most popular of bloggers or social media influencers!

Traditional media fuels social media

Bloggers and social media influencers often write about what's going on in traditional media. Chances are if you land an interview with a traditional media outlet, you're likely to catch the attention of the online world which is why many online stories often only take off once traditional media has given them an airing.

Traditional media has a significant social media presence

Most traditional media outlets also have an internet presence – such as blogs and social networking profiles – which means that once your story has appeared in a publication it is likely to get an even greater airing online. In fact media websites usually get significantly more traffic than the most popular blog!

Additional fodder for your online presence

Appearing in traditional media also provides businesses with a vital food-source for their blog or social media posts. Basically it provides them with bragging rights on the net!

So if you're thinking of ditching traditional media – don't!

However ensure that your publicity and traditional media efforts are part of a comprehensive digital and non-digital offering. Chances are, you'll do best by having a healthy mix of both.

In a nutshell

- *Publicity enables you to build your reputation and profile rapidly*
- *It gives you much sought-after third party endorsement*
- *It helps to dramatically fuel your online presence*

2 How do I get started?



Before trotting off some ill-considered media release or calling up the media and touting your wares, it is absolutely critical that you understand what you stand for, who you need to talk to, what your stories are and the likelihood of risk to your brand by getting into print.

Here is a list of questions you should be asking yourself. These questions are designed to provide a much needed framework for kicking off future media activity.

Who is my ideal client and precisely who am I targeting with my stories?

Who are the people who are using my products and services? Are they a specific gender or particular age group? Where are they located? What is their disposable income? If they are working for an organisation, what is their level of seniority?

Who are my referral groups?

Who are the people who refer my business to their clients? In the case of financial planners these would be accountants or in the case of mortgage brokers, property investment advisers. Keep in mind that these people need to be factored in when considering which media outlets and publications to target.

Who are my competitors?

What sets me apart from these organisations and how can I capitalise on this in my media activity? What is that unique selling proposition that truly sets me apart?

“Putting the key fundamentals in place is critical to getting started.”

What are the risks or challenges facing me if I speak with the media?

What dirty linen could be exposed and how can I prevent this negatively impacting my reputation? Are there issues plaguing the industry I am working in that could result in my business being tarred with the same brush? It is absolutely vital you attend to these hidden landmines as they could blow up in your face when least expected.

Which media should I engage with?

Most importantly, what media is my ideal client consuming and where precisely should I be targeting my efforts - mainstream or specialist print, radio, TV, business, general, specialist interest, and so? Also what media are my referral groups devouring? Keep in mind that these could be different to the ones consumed by your direct client base.

What stories should I be telling?

(See Chapter 3: ‘What makes a great media story?’)

How often should I approach the media?

My rule of thumb for media campaigns is monthly. More than this and you run the risk of being viewed as a nuisance and someone looking to turn the media into your own personal marketing machine. That said, should you have developed a strong relationship with specific members of the media who regularly turn to you for story ideas, weekly is acceptable, provided of course you are not selling that story to all and sundry.

What are my key messages?

What are the three key things you should include in your stories and interviews? (See section on: ‘What about key messages?’)

What outcomes should I base the effectiveness of my media coverage on?

Should this be an increase in sales, enhanced reputation or a lift in web, service/product page visitors? (See section on: ‘How do I measure my media success?’)

Once you have worked your way through these questions and developed the requisite answers (in essence developed your own short-form PR strategy) the next step in the process is to develop a master list of journalists, radio and TV program producers and their key contact details. This should include their email address, phone number (ideally mobile as landlines are notoriously never answered).

Also develop a calendar of media activities over a six month period – more than this is a waste of time as these stories will likely be bumped as other more topical issues emerge.

Ensure your calendar includes a mix of media outreach activities such as meeting with journalists for a cuppa. While these outreach activities are there to educate and inform media about your company and its products and services, they also provide you the opportunity to show off your knowledge and let media know how REALLY useful you could be as an expert commenter.

These meetings are also your own personal ‘fishing expedition’ enabling you to determine what the media want in the way of stories rather than what you think they want.

In a nutshell

- *Understand who your audience is*
- *Know what they are consuming*
- *Know what you would like to achieve*

3 What makes a great media story?



Phrased differently, what stories are likely to get a run in the media?

Over the years as a PR practitioner I have discovered that there is a huge disconnect between what my clients consider to be stories and what gets the media excited.

Hopefully the list below will provide greater clarity.

Stories that are newsworthy

Have you recently launched a new product or service, signed a new deal, completed a new project, merged with or bought out a new company or expanded your business? A word of warning: if it is a new product or service, it will only get a run if it is truly unique, a first of its kind or if it fills a gaping hole in the market.

Stories that are topical and relevant

Stories that tie in with unplanned or unexpected events – such as a disease outbreak, a controversy or scandal – or planned events such as looming elections, the federal budget or financial year-end. You can use these events to your advantage. Because everyone's talking about the same thing, the media are always looking for new angles on big stories and often struggle to constantly come up with new material. So if you can offer a fresh angle on a big current story there's more chance of you getting noticed by a grateful journalist or getting a mention or interview in the media.

"The media wants stories that inform, educate and entertain."

Really useful information

Does your business have information that people and businesses always need, such as tax tips, nutrition hints, property advice or budgetary ideas? Journalists love stories that solve problems and are truly useful to their readership or audiences.

Stories based on statistics

Do you have access to a large database of individuals or companies that would enable you to generate statistics? Alternatively can you dip into existing statistics and take the conversation further. The ideal statistics would point to an existing or looming problem which would enable you to provide the solution, further building your status as an expert and rising talent in your field.

Great client case studies

These would allow you to talk about how your offerings or expertise turned round or added value to your client. Case studies also give you the heaven-sent opportunity to showcase your business, products or services but with someone doing all the chest-beating on your behalf.

Is your business unusual, unique or even quirky?

Quirky stories often provide light relief from traditional business stories which can be dry, serious or downright depressing at times. One such company that comes to mind derives its income from transporting inebriated party-goers home in the comfort of their own cars, saving them the hassle of retrieving them the following day. Employees from the business cycle to temporarily stranded clients by bike. This folds up and fits into the client's boot and the client is driven home. The launch of the business was a major hit with the media and secured extensive coverage.

Do you have a colourful leader or controversial employees?

Or do you have a differing position on a current issue that can stir up debate? Keep in mind that if you go down this path, you will more than likely cop some flack so be prepared to wear it!

Awards

Has your organization or your employees won any significant awards or enjoyed any major achievements? Is there a wonderful human interest story that will pull at the emotional heartstrings and make for a truly uplifting and inspiring story? Remember people, not issues, often sell a story.

When all is said and done, what the media are looking for are stories that inform, educate and entertain.

In a nutshell

When pitching to journalists, it is important you frame your story around as many of the following elements as possible. Stories that get a run are generally:

- *Topical* • *Relevant* • *Unusual*
- *Controversial* • *Human*

4 How should I communicate my stories to the media?



Now that you know what makes for a great story, how should you tell these stories to the media?

While I'm a strong advocate for calling journalists direct and pitching your story ideas over the phone, it is critical you follow up those calls with either a media release or written materials.

Remember journalists are busy people and while they may have verbally given your story idea the go-ahead, don't expect them to do all the hard work. The expectation is that you assist in the process and follow up the call with background information. This way you can ensure nothing has been lost in translation.

While this follow up information could simply be provided informally in the message segment of your email, you could provide it in media release format. Should you decide to disseminate the information more widely at a later date; the job will have practically been done for you.

So how do you write a release?

My tried and tested approach is write it like a news story, ideally the way you'd expect to see it in print!

Create a compelling headline

Keep in mind that journalists receive dozens, if not hundreds, of releases each day, so invest the time to write a headline that grabs their attention. Use action verbs, clear, understandable language, and most importantly, keep it brief. One line is generally all you need

The introductory paragraph

The lead paragraph is the most important and should provide a 'hook' for the journalist. It should contain the 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where', and 'how' of your story. Remember, journalists don't have all the time in the world to sift through your information – they need to get it right up front. Generally the bulk of information provided thereafter is simply substantiating what you have already said.

The body of the piece

Write in the inverted pyramid style. After the lead paragraph, each remaining paragraph should be less important than the one preceding it. That way the editor can trim your release from the bottom up. Write in short sentences, short paragraphs and keep the information simple and to the point. Also try to keep the release to one page or two at the very most.

Make sure you include quotes in your release and that you attribute these to a particular person in the organisation. Remember to give that person a title. I would recommend against quoting multiple people in your release as this simply creates confusion. Stick to just one. Ideally quotes should come from people of authority in the organisation – your CEO, a member of your executive team, project heads, or those directly impacted by your announcement. Quoting key figures and people of importance adds credibility to your story.

Business backgrounder

Often referred to as a 'boilerplate' this brief summary at the bottom of your release should describe what your company does, where it is located and perhaps what makes it different to its competitors. It should also include a link to your company's homepage.

Remember to add the words "Media Release" at the top of the page so there is no doubt about what it is. Also date your release clearly.

Finally, finish off the release with your name and contact details assuming you are the one responsible for fielding additional questions from journalists.

"Always follow up any verbal communication with written text. Leave no room for misunderstanding or error."

You've written your media release, so what next?

This will depend on what you're planning to do with the information. You may simply be looking to furnish a journalist with background information or you may be looking to conduct a full-blown publicity campaign.

Should it be the latter and should you be looking to put the piece out broadly, my recommendation would be to email the piece out personally. This way you have control over what media is interested in the piece, what additional information they are looking for and if they are seeking an interview.

Make sure you have a compelling headline in the 'subject' part of your email and that you include the first paragraph of your media release in the 'message' section along with your contact details. This way journalists don't even need to open your media release attachment to determine whether or not they will run your piece. Basically you will have saved them that hassle.

Provide journalists with ample time to write their story and seek out additional information.

For print media, send the release out the night before or very early in the morning prior to publication.

For talk-back radio or television programs where more lead time for stories is required, a week in advance is usually quite acceptable. However, do inform producers and journalists of your embargo date.

Generally they are thankful for the additional time it gives them to pull together their story. However there may be those who put pressure on you to run the piece earlier than scheduled. If the program is very high profile and reaches your target audience in one hit, it may be worth the risk. However do keep in mind that 'going out early' could derail the remainder of your media campaign.

This is a dilemma facing public relations practitioners on a daily basis and one which doesn't have a clear-cut answer.

Sadly the decision is yours!

In a nutshell

- *Follow up conversations with written content*
- *Write your media release like a news story*
- *Send out media releases personally*
- *Provide journalists ample time to write their stories*

5 How should I engage with the media?



Many businesses looking for media mileage think that securing coverage is about sending out a damn good media release, sitting back and hoping for the best.

Sorry to tell you ladies and gents, it takes a heck of a lot more than that. Just like selling in your product or service to a potential client takes a lot of blood, sweat and tears, the same can be said for selling your story ideas into the media.

Hopefully this guide will help make the process a little easier:

Know your target media

You need to know the newspaper, magazine, radio or TV program you're targeting your story at. Nothing gets journalists more incensed than knowing you haven't done your homework – that you have no idea of the types of stories they run or who their readers and listeners are. Remember, you are judged by that first pitch so do make every effort to get it right.

Meet the media

Build a relationship with relevant journalists or editors. This is the best way of getting noticed and of demonstrating your breadth of knowledge on a topic. Journalists appreciate you taking the time out to meet them and potentially furnishing them with an exclusive story. Also don't leave relationship building to that initial meeting. Keep at it by regularly providing your valuable contacts with great ideas or stories. Even the latest company or industry research will be enormously appreciated as this triggers ideas for potential stories.

"A lot of spadework goes into attracting the attention of the media."

Be helpful to editors and journalists

Being helpful doesn't always involve providing them with information about your firm. Help them track down industry experts or information they might be looking for. Remember, your kind gestures will be remembered!

Journalists are busy

Personally I prefer emailing journalists as this isn't intrusive, enables journalists to think about your pitch or story idea and ensures they have a record of your story. However, don't leave it at that. Because the media gets inundated with stories and ideas, follow up that initial pitch with an email or call (preferably email) to ensure it hasn't missed their attention. However a word of caution here: avoid calling journalists when they are on deadline. For example, for journalists on daily publications this is generally afternoons so avoid this period like the plague or be prepared to encounter a somewhat cranky and less than helpful journalist.

Pitch to freelance writers

Another idea is to pitch to freelance writers who write for a bunch of different magazines or publications. If a freelancer likes your story they will push hard to get it published. Also if they like what you offer they will use your information elsewhere.

Content is important

A great story sells. You might have a wonderful relation with the media but if your story is a dud it won't get past first base.

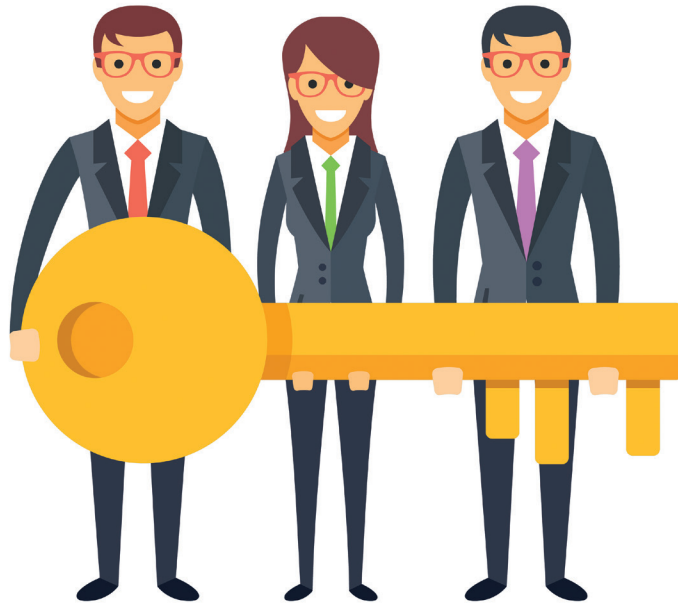
Use Google Alerts

If you are an expert at something, get Google Alerts on that topic. Should this become newsworthy or attract the attention of the media, get in touch. Journalists are constantly on the scout for subject matter experts and should your timing be right, you have an excellent opportunity of securing coverage.

In a nutshell

- *Understand the types of stories your chosen outlets run*
- *Build a relationship with chosen journalists and editors*
- *Help them whenever you can*
- *Don't become a nuisance*
- *Always furnish them with really great stories*

6 What about my key messages?



For those who are not familiar with the concept of ‘key messages’, they are the key points about your business, products or services you want your target audience to hear and most importantly, remember.

In fact key messaging goes well beyond media releases and media interviews and should be used in all your communication such as websites, at networking functions and whenever you need to describe your business.

So what are the steps involved in developing key messaging?

Begin at the beginning

While different messages can be developed for different purposes, scenarios and audiences ultimately they all have the same starting point. Begin the process by developing a set of short, standard phrases or paragraphs to describe your organization, programs and services and why you exist as an organisation. Then, as you need to reach out to specific audiences or implement new media campaigns, tailor these to suit your purpose.

Focus on your value-add

Your key messages should never be purely sales orientated. Focus more on the benefits or value your business can offer as this will ensure your messages are appealing and resonate with your audience.

Update your messaging

It is important to regularly review the key messages that refer to your business. Ideally this should happen once a year or when your business goes through a change of sorts. You may have added a new service or are targeting a new customer base. Your key messages will need updating to reflect these changes.

“These are the key things you want your audiences to remember most about your media interview or story.”

Be pithy and to the point

Write your key messages as short sentences. Long-winded and complicated messages are much harder to remember. Also by being concise you have more control over the message your audience hears. Deliver a long rambling answer to the media and you run the risk of only having part of your message going to air or being reported on. As is often the case with radio or television, you only have 7-8 seconds in which to deliver your message so brevity is the key.

Don't have too many messages

If you are creating key messages for your business you should aim to have around three or four key messages for each target audience. Concentrating on only a few messages will have a bigger impact and be more memorable.

Appeal to the emotions

This is critically important. If you don't stir your audience's emotions in some way, your messaging won't work. Remember, people will remember the way they felt long after they have forgotten the facts. For example one of the successful key messages I developed for a designated driver service and which was used over and over in media coverage was the following: 'We are dedicated to saving lives and making the roads a safer place.'

Be careful with numbers

If numbers help you tell your story more effectively, use them. However keep in mind your audience probably won't remember them if you're too precise. For example, instead of saying between 48%-52%, say 'about half' or instead of saying 92%, say 'about 90%'. Also avoid overloading your audience with numbers. Basically, the fewer the better!

Steer clear of jargon

Make your key messages simple and easy to understand by avoiding the use of industry related jargon. This will help your key messages to be understood by a wider range of people.

Be repetitive

Messages must be repeated multiple times in order for them to sink in. The more times your audience hears, reads or learns your key messages, the better they'll remember your brand. That said, make sure you respond appropriately to media questions and don't make your engagement all about your key messages.

Practice, practise, practise

Once your messages have been tested and you know what works, practice them. Don't wing it. Media interviews can be nerve-wracking. It's easy to stumble, forget what you wanted to say, and default into technical language. Practice helps prevent this.

In a nutshell

Your key messages should:

- *Resonate with your audience*
- *Be pithy and to the point*
- *Stir the emotions*
- *Be kept to a minimum*

7 How should I prepare for a media interview?



Unlike doing a presentation at a meeting or talking at a conference where you by and large have control over the outcome, a media interview is a more dynamic beast and much harder to reign in.

That said, there are ways to improve your odds and ensure your interview goes according to plan.

Preparation and finding ways to bulletproof your key messages are at the heart of a stand-out performance.

Know your media

Do some detective work and be forensic about the media outlets you want to appear on. Make note of the interview style – serious and hard-hitting, laidback and informal. Look at the length interviews run for. Are you likely to speak for 5-10 minutes or longer which means you have a bit more time to get your message across or are you doing a quick 10-second ‘grab’ for radio news which means you need to stick to your one big idea and articulate it quickly and pithily.

Knowledge is power and will ensure you are on the front-foot.

Understand your audience

Ask who matters most when you do that on-air, blog, or trade magazine interview. Being focused on the end reader or audience is vital to your preparation. Identifying and targeting your audience should come first, even before formulating your key media messages.

Prepare and make a plan for the interview

Do not under any circumstances try to wing a media interview. Even an accomplished and experienced interviewee needs to prepare fully before going in front of the TV cameras or radio microphone. You need to think carefully about the key messages you want to get across and how you can support and explain those message with strong examples and case studies. Also humanising your examples makes them much more memorable. After all people want to hear stories about people, not processes.

Also think about the negative or difficult questions you are likely to be asked and how you will answer them. This goes well beyond your business and includes what might be topical in your industry at the time. You might be asked to comment on an issue or competitor so make sure you have done your homework.

Be prepared. Don't leave things to chance. Know in advance what your goals are for the interview. Don't go into an interview and just answer questions without a thought for what you want the audience to know. That way, you yield control of the interview to the journalist.

Here are some of the questions you should be asking yourself in the days prior to your campaign going live:

- What would I like to see come out of the media coverage?
- What 3-4 key messages should I relay?
- Do I have anecdotes and examples to support my messages?
- Do I have any human stories to tell?
- What about negative and difficult questions? Am I properly prepared?
- What is happening in my industry currently? Am I across all issues?

Take the initiative during the interview

Don't wait for the journalist to get around to asking the question you so desperately want to answer. This may never happen. Instead segue into the topic or issue you want to discuss by asking one of the following bridging questions:

- What really matters is ...
- The key issue is ...
- What's absolutely critical is ...
- What people should be more concerned about is ...
- The more interesting question is ...

These bridging techniques can also be used to restate key messages at other stages during an interview to better enable you to keep the interview on track.

Signposting

This is a technique which makes it obvious to the reporter you have something interesting to say provided of course they ask the right question.

For example, if you finished an answer with:

- But that's not the most important thing ... or
- That's not even the key thing ...

Chances are the reporter will ask 'so what is the most important thing?' It's human nature to want to know what the most important thing is.

As well as giving you control and leading the journalist to your key message, it also tells the audience to concentrate as you are about to tell an interesting story.

This technique works well during a longer radio interview when you're in the studio. It helps add ebb and flow to the piece which the producer, journalist and audience will appreciate.

Stick to your plan

Don't digress. Stick with what the reporter is asking you and what you want to get across. You know what you want to communicate from the start so stick with that plan.

Also avoid long-winded answers as this gives journalists the power to choose which parts of your answer will be used and which omitted. So keep it brief but interesting!

*"You can improve the odds
by being prepared."*

If you don't know the answer, say so

There is nothing wrong with saying you don't know, that a decision hasn't been reached, that you aren't sure of the answer, even that you will report back. No-one is the font of all wisdom and journalists understand this.

Don't say 'no comment'

When you say 'no comment' it almost always looks like you're trying to hide something. Give a reason why you can't answer a question such as the issue is in court, you are not in a position to comment and so on.

Ideally you should anticipate difficult questions in advance and plan an answer that won't be damaging.

Apologise when you have done something wrong

Interviews can go terribly when people don't apologise for a mistake or something they have clearly overlooked and instead resort to excuses or worse still, try to cover up. Admit your mistake and apologise. More importantly, talk about what action you have taken to rectify the situation and ensure it does not happen again. Also reassure

readers or listeners by putting the issue into context – it happened on someone else's watch, it was a one-off event, it is the first time this happened and so on.

The best approach is to take it on the chin. A journalist will know if you are not being honest and will push with increasingly more difficult questions so best deal with the issue right up front before you find yourself deeper and deeper in the quagmire.

Avoid technical answers

Other than when you are talking to a technical journalist who is writing for a like-minded readership, avoid talking over people's heads using technical jargon. Answer as simply as possible and with vocabulary most understand.

Don't ask to approve a story before it is published

This makes you look unprofessional. Journalists occasionally fact-check information so volunteer to help in this regard or to assist with the provision of further information.

Ultimately to perform well in an interview – practise, practise, practise.

The more times you do it the better you become!

In a nutshell

- *Understand the media outlet's interview style*
- *Make a plan for the interview and stick to it*
- *Get your key messages across*
- *Never say 'no comment'.*
- *Apologise when apologies are due.*

8 How quickly can I expect coverage?



My brutal response to that question – most definitely not overnight. Like any sales process (which media liaison is) it takes time.

Recently a brand new client who had never before had media exposure demanded to know if on his first media outing he could be guaranteed coverage in multiple publications and better still, the opportunity to appear on the front page of a premium business publication.

“Neither,” I answered as politely as possible. “Right now you and your business are invisible to the media – journalists are not aware of you and your business and if they are, they have no idea that the information you are about to provide them with, is credible or correct.

“Basically they don’t know you well enough to take the risk!”

“So how quickly will it take me to become visible,” he quickly retorted?
“Surely just a month or so!”

I then deftly turned the tables on my prospective client and asked how long it took to get his business off the ground.

What followed was a very long pause.

“Two to three years”, he finally answered somberly.

Precisely! Just like setting up a business or launching a new product or service, the same can be said for securing publicity and building a relationship with the media. It takes time. It is a process, not an event. If you are expecting instant up-take, you will in most cases be sorely disappointed.

Just as building your business requires those first few early adopters to help you get started; building your profile in the media also requires those first few journalists or editors who are prepared to give you a go.

“Like sales, it’s a process which takes time.”

Once you have appeared in print once, other media are more likely to follow.

So getting back to my client’s initial question – how long will it take to secure regular and worthwhile coverage?

Six months, often even a year. However, this will require a lot of hard work – regularly putting out stories that are topical, informative, newsworthy and at times a tad controversial and most importantly, responding rapidly to media requests when they arrive.

Do this zealously and you will reach the tipping point – that magical moment when the media come knocking on your door asking for stories, ideas and comments rather you having to constantly reach out.

Ultimately raising your profile is about persistence, consistency and tenacity. In other words – don't give up. There will be times when you do not get a run in the media but if you subscribe to long term gratification, over time, you will accumulate a significant portfolio of media coverage!

In a nutshell

- *Securing coverage is a process and takes time*
- *To be successful ensure your stories are informative and newsworthy*
- *Be helpful and respond rapidly to requests from the media*

9 How do I measure my media successes?



So what's it all worth? How do you measure the value of the editorial coverage you have secured in a magazine, newspaper, website or blog?

With the advent of social media and the fact that the majority of online media articles provide readers with the option of 'sharing' and/or providing comments, measuring media coverage has become murkier than before.

Once upon a time when traditional media was strictly traditional, many people based their media successes on a measure referred to as Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE). That means you measure the amount of space dedicated to your organization and compare that with how much you'd pay for an advertisement of the same size.

However even back then this did not make a lot sense given that advertising and public relations are two very different beasts and cannot be compared.

That said, many continue to use this approach despite its much maligned status.

My preference is a good balance of quality and quantity - coverage that presents your business in a good light and in as many relevant publications or platforms as possible.

Also given that social media is now a vital part of your public relations mix, it is also about the quality of social media engagement with regards your media coverage - that is the number of shares or comments garnered by a particular article.

"Measuring media coverage has become murkier than before."

Monitoring your coverage

For many, Google Alerts and knowing which media has responded to media releases or conducted interviews is the mechanism most commonly adopted.

However, there are paid services such as Meltwater, Trendkite, iSentia, Slicemedia and so on which provide a much more comprehensive tracking capability.

- Meltwater is one of my favourites as it allows users to monitor and track their brand, competition and relevant news by monitoring editorial, blogs and social media. It also allows for engagement in conversations and provides an analysis of results. <https://www.meltwater.com/au/about/>
- Trendkite also measures the impact of traditional press and social media <http://www.trendkite.com/>
- Isentia provides both traditional and social media coverage (with its Slicemedia service) providing a low cost solution for monitoring newspapers, magazines, journals, AM and FM radio, television, blogs and websites in Australia and New Zealand. <http://www.isentia.com/>

In a nutshell

- *Aim for a good balance of quality and quantity*
- *Use Google Alerts*
- *Use paid services that monitor both publicity and social media*

10 How do I get maximum bang for my publicity buck?



With the ever shrinking media, securing mountains of coverage isn't as easy as it used to be. However the explosion of social media and content marketing is providing businesses with a host of opportunities to amplify their stories to a much wider audience.

Here are a few examples of how you can wring the most from those well-crafted words you have so painstakingly put together for the media.

Post your media release to your website once it has been distributed

Create an online media or press-room where you can archive all your releases. Journalists exploring your site will be able to benefit, as will potential customers or clients. While competitors will also be able to view a release; keep in mind that by then it would already have been made public.

Reformat as a blog

Just about any media release can be reformatted into a blog post. You might even want to transform it into a couple of posts, depending on the amount of information contained in the release. This provides fresh content for your blog and is an additional place for people to view the information. However a word of warning: don't post your blog ahead of securing coverage as this could kill any opportunity for securing coverage. Your story would in essence be considered 'old news'. Best post your blog as your stories appear in print.

"Amplifying your stories to a wider audience is much easier than it used to be."

Use content for social media purposes

This includes LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and so on. Again, don't jump the gun. Make sure your story goes to print first. Once done, it is open season for social posting. However, make sure you include appropriate links back to your blog or online press room as this will help drive traffic to your web site.

Once you have secured coverage, what next?

Favourable media coverage can be extended in a variety of ways, both on and offline. But you need to act quickly before the story becomes old news. Here are several ways to get maximum value out of your press coverage.

- Link to coverage from your website. Be sure to post links to the media placement from the online media room on your website.
- Highlight coverage on your home page. Also feature your prized coverage on your site's home page. It can be something as simple as just the media outlet's logo linked to the story (for example, "As Featured In XYZ Magazine"). Even if you already have a separate press section on your site, not everyone will visit that page. You want your latest achievement to be under the spotlight.

- Get social. Today the majority of online media articles provide readers with the option of ‘sharing’ and/or providing comments so make sure you use this facility. In fact get all your staff to share the story with their connections on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and so on. This is relatively straight-forward and users will be led through the process via a series of prompts. If you can’t link to the article (because it’s subscriber content only), take a photo or screenshot, then share it on your social media platforms. Remember timeliness is key, so get cracking as soon as the story appears.
- Send an email. Launch a special email with a link to the media placement to customers, suppliers and any other groups you think might be interested. Possibly use this as an opportunity to thank them for their support. If the placement is online, encourage them to share with their networks.
- If your story does not get coverage, send your media release to your customer or client subscriber list regardless. They’re not likely to see the original media release so may appreciate the update.
- Additional resources for sales staff. If you have a sales team, have them include copies of coverage as part of their leave-behind sales packets at meetings with prospective clients, at trade shows, and so on. However, make sure you have reprint permission first. To secure permission, ring the media outlet in question. Each has its own set of rules in this regard. Keep in mind, third-party endorsement from a news story adds more credibility to your company than advertising.
- Promote in office. If your media placement is an article or blog post, frame it and show it off on the wall of your foyer. If you’ve got several clips under your belt, consider putting printouts in a portfolio book and leave it in your waiting room or at reception. Wouldn’t you rather customers flip through that than out-dated copies of magazines or newspapers?

Given that there are so many ways to communicate with the public these days, it would be a shame not to take advantage of them.

In a nutshell

Amplify your media stories by:

- *Reformatting publicity materials for use in social media*
- *Sharing all media successes on social media*
- *Using coverage as vital resources for your sales staff*

In conclusion - To do or not to do?



Finally getting back to that initial question: is publicity worthwhile?

Like it or not it remains the holy grail of all marketing activity and has helped to successfully launch many a new venture and keep existing businesses consistently in the public eye.

Over the years as a PR practitioner I have seen businesses grow from small two-person operations to nationwide businesses and previously ‘invisible’ subject matter experts become media super stars, all thanks to publicity.

However this generally isn’t as a result of some really good luck or the occasional blast of media activity.

It has been about persistence and viewing profile-raising as a long-term exercise:

- Regularly sending out media releases, statistics and other documents of interest. When I talk about ‘regularly’ I mean fortnightly or at the very least, monthly.
- Keeping in touch with the media by periodically meeting over coffee or breakfast or simply by picking up the phone
- Constantly commenting to the media on issues of relevance
- Quickly responding to requests from journalists should they require fodder or commentary for stories or an introduction to other subject matter experts.

Do these things and you will be remembered. Don’t and you run the risk of being forgotten.

If this all sounds far too hard, keep in mind that there are those who are happy to keep things bubbling along on your behalf.

Should you require any assistance in this regard, don’t hesitate to get in touch with Parker Public Relations via:

Email: wendy@parkerpublicrelations.com.au

Mobile: 0422 694 503

Sending us your request via our website contact form:

<http://parkerpublicrelations.com.au/contact/>