




#### Additional Tools

-  Vendor Selection
-  Return on Investment
-  Copywriting & Graphic Design

## Publicity

Have you ever read a story about a company and then contacted them to learn more about their product or service? Or perhaps you've heard a CEO's speech and found yourself researching the company later on?

**Publicity in the media can be extremely valuable in building credibility and awareness for your company.** For example, a legitimate news story is an endorsement that can reach a wide audience for very little cost beyond your own creativity and time. There are many forms of publicity including

- ▶ News stories/interviews in trade journals, industry sites, newspapers, magazines, etc.
- ▶ "Expert" quotes in a story written by a journalist or blogger
- ▶ Self-authored stories published on websites or in industry publications
- ▶ Speaking engagements

Publicity is a highly cost-effective strategy that can

- ▶ Build awareness about your products/services, expertise and people
- ▶ Drive prospects to your website
- ▶ Drive participation in a promotion or event
- ▶ Educate the market about problems your company can solve
- ▶ Create an ongoing dialogue with the market

The key to success: create newsworthy stories. They should be interesting, relevant, timely, and offer new information or insight to your prospects.

Even if you don't think you have newsworthy content to share with the world, you can benefit by implementing small programs to raise your visibility. At the very least, you should include news releases on your website and home page; they help in search engine rankings and enable prospects to see what you've been doing.

Publicity isn't about luck. It's about investing in a good PR program, and it can really pay off over time.

BEST CASE	NEUTRAL CASE	WORST CASE
<p>Your company is very well-known in your industry. When you launch a product or have a newsworthy story, important publications write about you, and you're often quoted in industry articles.</p> <p>You capitalize on the role the internet plays in publicity -- your press releases drive prospects and customers to your website. You also use blogs or other online publicity techniques to create a strong presence on the internet.</p>	<p>You use PR sporadically with mixed results -- an occasional blurb in an industry journal, a miscellaneous quote as an expert. You put press releases on your website and distribute them online; you know they make your site more interesting to prospects, but you're not sure whether you're gaining the full benefit from your efforts.</p>	<p>You don't use any form of PR. You may be a startup or an established company, but you're not known by your industry press. You see your competitors featured in industry publications even when your solution may be better; your company doesn't seem to have that level of credibility, and you're not sure how to get it.</p>

## Key concepts & steps

### Before you begin

Tie your publicity strategy to goals you've identified in your annual [marketing plan](#).

### Create a publicity strategy

Don't just "shotgun" press releases when you need to drum up some attention. Plan your publicity strategy as you would any marketing campaign:

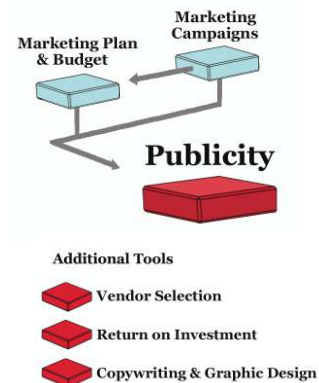
- ▶ Develop a calendar that ties story ideas to key events and spreads your storytelling out over the year.
- ▶ List events that may offer good speaking opportunities.
- ▶ Identify publications, reporters and bloggers who cover subjects that are relevant for your company.
- ▶ Create traditional and online press materials to give reporters support materials for their stories.
- ▶ Know the audience for each story and carefully target your media.

### Develop newsworthy story ideas

Every day, journalists are bombarded with press releases touting new product releases, business alliances, research discoveries, etc. But journalists don't just make announcements -- they need to tell compelling stories that their readers will find interesting and useful. A trade journal may run one-paragraph blurbs about new products, but to get headlines, photos, interviews and pages, you need to develop real stories.

Like movies, good news stories are often about conflict. An endless stream of positive information is boring. Instead, develop stories with substance: Good vs Evil, Nature vs Nurture, Race Against Time, Company A vs Company B, Employee Against the World, Company vs the System.

In addition, good stories can be extremely "viral" when you distribute them on the web.



## Market your stories and expertise

Journalists need stories; when you have a story, you have something to offer. With a quick, courteous phone call and a simple pitch, you may get a journalist to say, “Yes, I’m interested in that story, send me your material.” That three-minute phone call could potentially make a substantial difference in your campaign success.

Reach out when you identify a potential speaking engagement or find a journalist or blogger who may want to quote an expert from your company. Be sure to prepare a short pitch and support materials as well.

## Use the internet

Many PR experts say the traditional press release is dead. These days, a worthwhile PR strategy has to capitalize on the internet.

- ▶ Write a second version of your normal releases with rich keywords and a format that helps search engines find the release.
- ▶ Post your search-friendly releases on your site – they should be an actual page on the site, not a PDF.
- ▶ Send your release to internet news distribution services.
- ▶ Consider adding an RSS feed to your site – it will send updated content to other publishers.

## What’s next?

It’s difficult to measure the return on publicity, but if you’re really focused on creating stories and reaching out, you have strong potential for success. One big story or important speaking engagement could generate fantastic results, so keep at it!

