

Public Relations

A strong public relations program is much more than distributing press releases. While press releases do generate a steady stream of media coverage about your company and its services, there are many additional opportunities for you to be included in news stories on a regular basis.

Marketing Brief:

Strategic Promotion through Public Relations

Key Public Relations Vehicles

- Contributed articles
- Case histories
- Company website
- Blogs/blogging
- Press releases
- Speaking
- Awards



McGrew Marketing is a full-service marketing and public relations agency that specializes in the B2B market including professional business services, technology services, life sciences, healthcare and other markets in the mid-Atlantic.

There are many ways to promote business solutions through public relations.

Thought Leadership

A highly effective way to position your company and executives as thought leaders in your markets is through contributed articles and opinion pieces. They do so by showcasing your expertise on issues, trends and business needs in the industry.

The most frequent opportunities include:

- Trend and issue articles in industry publications
- Educational articles in industry publications
- Articles on general business trends in regional daily or weekly newspapers

A strategic thought leadership campaign should include several articles placed in core publications that target your market audience.

In addition to brand awareness--which is strengthened each time an article is published by the media--contributed articles can also be marketed as background materials for use in business development or telemarketing efforts as well as reprints for press kits, the web site and sales kits.

Customer Case Histories

Customer case histories showcase your value proposition and provide very credible, third-party testimony about the benefits of your services or products. Ideally, they demonstrate the ROI of a service or product and how it solved a business challenge. Because of this third-party credibility, they are highly persuasive sales and media tools.

Customer success stories can be marketed in several important ways:

- they can be used with the vertical trade and regional business media to pitch feature stories
- they can be included in the company sales kit as detailed customer references and as article reprints, and
- they can be included on the web site for prospects and media

Use Your Website to its Full Potential

The Internet is brimming with well designed, sophisticated web sites promoting companies' services and products. Yet, a web site can be a lot like a paid advertisement --making a variety of claims which are often unsubstantiated.

Many companies are wary of an organization's web site if it does not include any third-party information such as clients and testimonials. It can be a red flag that the company isn't ready for prime time.

It is important that your company provide credible, objective, third-party information on your site to support both your value proposition and promotional messages.

What types of third-party information should you provide? The same information that you develop for public relations:

- customer testimonials about the use of your services and products
- a portfolio of your projects and clients
- articles written about your company in the media
- examples of industry leadership including awards, industry speaking engagements, participation in industry associations

The Value of Article Placements in the Media

Just how cost-effective is PR? The following costs are representative.

Media Placement	Cost
One 4-color full page print ad in the average trade magazine	\$8,000-10,000
One full page article in the average trade magazine obtained through PR	\$2,000-3,000
One ¼-page ad in the average trade magazine	\$3-4,000
One ¼-page write up of a press release announcement*	\$250*

*The cost of writing and distributing a press release is prorated since it is distributed to dozens of publications at one time, bringing down its net cost per publication placement.

Blogs & Blogging

Being relevant in your market space includes leading and participating in industry conversations and being perceived as a thought leader. Participating in blog discussions can help accomplish this. Blogs are also a strategic way to promote messages around company services, specialization, and issues and trends in the industry.

Your company's pool of influencers extends beyond the media and includes association members, customers, vendors, regulators and others. These individuals all communicate and influence each other by sharing their opinions and experiences in online communities and blogs.

We recommend that major press release announcements be put out on a distribution service such as BusinessWire. This ensures that it is posted to hundreds of Internet portals and sites. This is important because the Internet is often the first place that research is conducted by prospects about solutions in the market.

Speaking

Leverage your attendance at tradeshows and conferences as well as your membership in industry associations through speaking engagements. Attendees and members are always looking for information on solutions to meet their business challenges and to learn more about market issues and trends.

Press Releases

Press releases are the most efficient means of communicating news about a new service offering, customer contract, or company milestone, both in terms of reaching large numbers of a target market and in overall cost effectiveness. Consistent press releases will keep news about your company in front of the editors at targeted publications and build increased name recognition, image, and awareness for the company.

Awards

There are many national, regional and local opportunities for your company to receive the recognition it has earned. Some awards focus exclusively on growth and revenue, while others focus on industry solutions and best practices.



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