

5 Tips for Multi-Media PR

by Jim Rauh, JR&A Marketing Communications

If the elephant in your promotional parade broke ranks and made major deposits in the Mayor's garden, Public Relations --- not advertising --- would be your first call.

Damage control, reputation, image-building, and the art of assuage are only a few of the many faces of PR, a practice often underutilized, under-deployed and too often misunderstood by business and the internet marketing community.

Given the potential for effective business and social media market visibility today, especially in a service-oriented economy, PR --- two letters that spell credibility and sales support in any language --- should be given the same weight as advertising. It need not take a crisis.

To be sure, intelligent PR can and should be mind-bending. Do the research. Evaluate. Mix with innovation, courage, media savvy, persistence, patience, and a dollop of charm, and you have a recipe for impact. A few tips:

1. Know Your Markets. They are consumers, business owners, managers and stockholders who read, blog, net-surf, watch cable TV, listen to radio, and the human side in communications. You want them to trust you, your company brand, message, products and services. You need them to realize that the benefits they receive will be greater than the costs they incur.*

2. Unless you're buying space on the Mouse World site to explain why the cam tottle on the Model 66 unit malfunctions, there are no assurances of feedback.

PR targets issues, philosophies, and opinions. And it goes a long way toward altering perceptions. If you opt to involve the commercial media, know that the majority will tell your story their way, not yours. But also know that if you create a compelling case for your story, any reasonable reporter or editor will consider what you say and very possibly act on it.

3. Perceptions are Seldom Uniform. Thus, target audiences must be carved into segments. Be mindful of the "4 P's": 1) Develop an alluring *Product* ; 2) Play down the *Price*; 3) Ensure that the *Places* the target encounters the product are convenient to their lifestyle; and 4) Promote the encounter creatively via strategies and tactics designed to generate best response.

4. Measure Results. Like the electronic tools that rule our lives, the marketplace changes constantly. Watch what you're doing. Make sure it's working. Know your competition. Be ready to make changes, quickly.

5. Aftermarket the Good News. When the hits come --- and if you've thoughtfully shaped your story and your market approach, they will --- use the news. Post it to your site, your client's, build a link to it (i.e., make it easy to access) for your customers and prospects. Make a product or news release from it. Do not assume that those who should have seen it/heard it actually did.

Oh, about that elephant? With the help of the Humane Society and the city groundskeeper, the PR guy convinced the mayor on the value of elephant droppings as garden fertilizer. The story made front pages and home pages around the country.

* Social Marketing Institute, 2008

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