

# Attract Media Coverage Without Spending Advertising \$\$

By June Campbell

Advertising is expensive. PR is often low cost or free. Try these ten tips for attracting free PR to your business. But here is a word of caution. When sending press releases to the media, remember that less is more. The journalist who encounters a press release from your company every week learn to ignore anything with your name on it.

## **1. Capitalize on an Anniversary**

Is your business having a significant anniversary? Tenth year in business? Ten thousandth customer served? Five thousand books sold? Arrange some sort of celebration, draft a press release and contact your local media. You can never tell. You must might coverage from the local newspaper, radio or television station.

## **2. Donate Something**

Does your networking group have draws for door prizes? Offer to donate the prize, then give something that's heavily branded with your businesses name and contact information. Similarly, find out if local charities are engaged in fund raising opportunities. Offer one of your products or services as a prize or to be auctioned.

## **3. Host a Special Event**

Have a Singles Night, a Kid's Night, or a Senior Citizen's Night. Send a press release to your local media. A supermarket did a smashing business following a well publicized Singles Night complete with dancing in the aisles, games and contests.

## **4. Sponsor Something**

Provide sponsorship at a trade show, a convention, a sporting event, or an arts festival. Sponsor a local kid to attend an event in another city. Sponsor a kid's sports team. Offer a scholarship to help a young person attend university. Remember to send the press release.

## **5. Decorate Creatively**

Put up a stunning decoration or window display for the Holidays, or for spring, or fall, or in recognition of some particular event in your city. Then invite the media to take a look. The key is to have something unique or original that'll warrant pictures and video taping.

## **6. Write Articles**

If you're in business, you're an expert on some topic. Write articles on your area of expertise. Submit them to local or national media, magazines, web sites, trade journals or other pertinent publications. Your article should not be a promotion of your business, but should inform readers about a topic of interest. Accountants might write articles on tax tips, for example, or florists could write about plant care.

### **7. Let Them Know You're an Expert**

When newsworthy stories become available, media often look for a local expert for quotes and comments. Contact your local or national media, and let them know you are available to comment on topics within your area of expertise. Suppose your expertise is ecommerce, for example. Next time your local paper has an ecommerce-related story, they just might contact you for a comment. You (and your business) will get some excellent and cost-free publicity.

### **8. Get T-shirts and Go Public**

Decorate t-shirts with your company's logo. Sign up your staff to participate in charity walks and other community events. Ensure that everyone wears the t-shirts.

### **9. Donate Something to a Local Charity**

Donate books, used computers, products or services to a school or charity. In one community, local businesses attracted enormous publicity by organizing an event in which they outfitted adolescent youth from low-income families for the spring prom. Participating clothing shops, beauticians, florists, even taxi companies got in on the act and attracted enormous publicity while doing good works.

### **10. Publicize a New Product, Service or Research Finding**

Have something new to offer? If it's at all unique in your area, write your press release and send it to media and trade journals. Even if you get mentioned in the gossip column of a trade journal, it's still good publicity!

### **11. Offer Something Unique**

Local shops in one community worked together to hold a Men's Night and shortly before the Holidays. Males received assistance in purchasing lingerie, perfumes, jewelry and accessories for the woman in their lives. It was a new concept in the area and a big success. The media loved it.

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