



## The Power of Publicity: Finding *Your* Media Niche

Whether you are the owner, manager, or public relations director of a company, chances are, you're always looking for ways to get your name in the public eye. While advertising is a great start, enhancing your advertising with publicity creates a perfect marriage of exposure for your company. What is publicity? It's non-paid communication to promote your company in a positive light using media vehicles like television, radio, magazines, and newspapers. Through publicity you build mutually beneficial relationships between your business and the public on whom your success or failure depends.

When it comes to publicity, most people believe they can write a press release, send it to a TV station, radio station or newspaper and just wait for the avalanche of phone calls. But time goes by... and after they realize there aren't any reporters beating down their door, they make a few phone calls to the newsroom only to discover that no one even read the press release. All of that time and work goes down the drain. You're back to square one and you start over, but to no avail. So how do you end the vicious cycle of disappointment?

### Research can make or break your pitch

Research. Plain and simple, you need to know your audience and know your media market. And research is the key to both.. So first and foremost you need to take a look at your message and ask yourself a few questions—is it newsworthy? Is it consumer-related? Does it have a local twist? Is it a visual story? What demographic am I targeting—how old is my audience and what is their target household income? The answers to these questions will help you craft your 'pitch' and determine which media outlets you should target.

While most people go for the saturation effect, seeking radio, television *and* print media simultaneously, the reality is that your message might not be a good fit for all media. So that brings us back to the research table. Now it's time to do a little homework and figure out where your message stands the best chance of garnering media attention.

### How do I get on TV?

TV newscasts communicate to their audience through pictures and conversation. Producers look for newsworthy topics that are visual and entertaining or informative 'how-to' segments. They want compelling conversation and pictures that will grab the viewers' attention. They don't want a 'talking head' rattling off statistics or blatantly plugging a new book.

Worried that your message isn't visual? Try this- ask yourself how you'd explain your message to a child? Did that help you think of any pictures or simple words that fit your message? Those pictures or simple words can translate into graphics for a TV story. We once had a life insurance agency that wanted us to arrange local and national TV appearances for their CEO. The pitch we created offered interviews discussing *the importance of life insurance and why it's vital for women to protect themselves for the future*. Sounds like you could sleep right through it, right? But we offered more than just the interview. We had the client prepare graphs and bullet points with short information snippets showing the mortality rate of women versus men. The TV stations turned them into graphics and voila— it became a very powerful visual story that was successful for our client and the media. **Keep** in mind too, that the morning, noon and evening newscasts are each geared towards a different audience. The early morning shows are usually watched by working adults and families getting ready for school. Notice how the news formats shift into more of a talk and lifestyle segment that's sprinkled with news 'updates' after 8AM when most commuters have already left for work ?

