

Main Street Media Savvy—get seen, heard,
and celebrated in your own backyard ... and beyond!

Media-Savvy-to-Go

FREE Media-Savvy-to-Go E-Book

Build Your
Business &
Your Profit
with
Free Publicity



Free Media-Savvy-to-Go E-Book

By Nancy S. Juetten

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Snohomish County Business Journal “Media-Savvy-to-Go” columns, 2006-07

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- Learn how to generate buzz for your business
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WHY I CREATED THIS FREE E-BOOK

One of the most powerful, influential things you can do to build buzz for your business and earn expert status is to write for the media.

In late 2006, I earned the opportunity to share do-it-yourself publicity tips with the readers of the *Snohomish County Business Journal*. For a full year, I invested time, passion, and effort to prepare useful columns that would empower the readers' media relations success, while reinforcing my own expertise as an expert. The readers enjoyed the comments, and so, too, did the publisher of another prestigious business journal in the Puget Sound market.

Today, I write a monthly "Media Savvy" column for the *Puget Sound Business Journal* and reach an even wider audience of potential business decision makers with this empowering, useful, and highly relevant information. This goes to show that one good thing can lead to another. You can have the same experience if you just get into action to share your expertise with the world.

Now, you can enjoy all 12 *Snohomish County Business Journal* columns and the additional columns I have contributed to date for the *Puget Sound Business Journal* in this comprehensive and free e-book. These columns are intended to empower your DIY publicity success. My wish is that you apply this information to your own buzz building advantage as you share your message, your stories, and your expertise with the media that are right for your message.

And, as you gain value from the information I generously share for free, just imagine what value awaits when you avail yourself to the Media-Savvy-to-Go line of information products, my Publici-Tea™ workshops and audio files, and the Publici-Tea™-TO-GO! gift bundles that can lend even more fuel to your DIY publicity success.

The Publici-Tea™-TO-GO! gift bundles are an expression of my cause related initiative to support women newly diagnosed with breast cancer. These bundles support women business owners who want to learn the essentials of DIY publicity over tea, chocolate, and biscotti – in the time it takes to savor a really good cup of tea. Please visit www.publiciteatogo.com to learn more about this bundle of comfort, joy, and DIY publicity tools and inspiration. It is packaged in a hot pink tote box and includes a bundle of treats and information to delight your senses with every lesson you learn and apply, and 10% of the net profits benefit the Northwest Hope & Healing Foundation. This non profit organization delivers signature healing baskets, abundantly filled with comfort and joy items such as chocolate, creams, lotions, and teddy bears that encourage women newly diagnosed with breast cancer at a time in their lives when they need support the most. I invite you to learn more by visiting www.nwhopeandhealing.org.

You can read even more about products, gift bundles, and services at www.mainstreetmediasavvy.com.

You can also opt-in to receive the free Media-Savvy-to-Go ezine that offers tips, stories, and resources to empower your DIY publicity success at this same link.

I wish you good publicity that lasts forever and all the buzz and business building benefits that can flow to your door when you get into action today.

Sincerely,



Nancy S. Juetten

Marketing yourself? Put your best face forward

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy S. Juetten](#)

If a picture is worth a thousand words, what does your do-it-yourself head shot say about you?

Many small business owners take the do-it-yourself route when submitting head-shot photos for media use in order to save time and money or meet a pressing deadline. This can work well, provided they take care to capture a winning image. Other times, owners submit images for media use that don't put their best faces forward. Maybe these mug shots would pass for a driver's license or passport, but not for promotional use. As humorist Erma Bombeck once quipped, "If you look like your passport photo, it's time to go home." Face it, just owning a digital camera doesn't mean you should use it for business. A poor portrait can reflect negatively on your personal brand and reputation.

Newspapers publish executive photos in their "Briefcase" sections, and readers turn to them to learn who has been promoted or moved to new positions. Readers who seek new business prioritize prospecting efforts based on these postings and follow up to extend congratulations and invite new business conversations.

In addition, many papers publish how-to columns from area experts offering tips that readers can use to make smarter business decisions. A quality head shot can turn such a column into a credible and persuasive branding tool that can live on as a professional reprint long after the newspaper has faded.

Since your image is on the line, supply a photo that does the best that can be done with what you've got to work with. Then, when editors see your photo, they won't quip that you have a face for radio. Worse yet, they won't exclude your photo from the mix in favor of others of better quality.

Some of the most common missteps with do-it-yourself head-shot photography include:

- Unflattering lighting
- A nonneutral background (plants that appear to be growing out of an executive's head)
- Poor wardrobe choices (bold patterns and dated clothing)
- Too much blue eye shadow
- Dated or messy hairstyles
- Far more person showing than the standard head-and-shoulders view
- Somber facial expressions
- Submitting a photo from five or 10 years ago. This can backfire when folks meet you for the first time. If you are not truthful about your appearance, what else might you fib about? Keep in mind that hairstyles, hair colors, and fashion trends change as time marches on. If your reflection in the mirror today doesn't match your photo, it is time to sit for a new one.

Henry Schulz, principal of Henry Schulz Photography, has photographed Miss Washington candidates for the past seven years, along with numerous local executives for a wide range of publications. Based on his years of photographing the bold and the beautiful, the shy and retiring, and those who are growing older and wider, he offers these tips:

Personal Grooming:

Women -- Pay special attention to hair and make-up. Apply more blush than usual to avoid appearing washed out.

Men -- Hair should be neatly styled, and facial hair should be precisely trimmed.

Clothing: Solid, medium- to dark-tone business attire works best. Faint pinstripes or subtle patterns are acceptable.

Background: A smooth neutral-colored background works well. You should be situated at least 3 feet away from the background, and 6 feet away is preferable. This helps keep the background out of focus.

Posing: Turn away from the camera at approximately a 45-degree angle. Turn your head directly to the camera with the shoulders still facing away from the camera. The back should be arched slightly with your shoulders back.

Technique: Framing in the camera should be from the bottom of the breast pocket on a man's jacket, or just above the "V" where the blazer meets when buttoned. Allow a few inches of background above the head. Always use your "on camera flash" to take the picture, whether in daylight or indoors. Let the subject know when you snap the photo. Saying "cheese" or a similar phrase really works because it tends to put a twinkle in the eye and a smile on the face of the person being photographed.

Cropping: Images of 4 by 5 inches or 5 by 7 inches are adequate for most uses.

Digital quality: Most newspapers and magazines prefer digital photos of at least 300 DPI, or dots per inch.

Labeling: Label the images by first and last name, your title, your company and the date.

If you insist on do-it-yourself photography, follow these tips. As an alternative, hire a professional photographer to capture a winning image. The investment of time and money is modest, and the end result will put your best face forward so folks beyond your mother will notice.

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Getting publicity for your business on the cheap

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

Small-business owners struggle with getting known. It's a pain that causes sleepless nights as people try to figure out how to build awareness and attract new clients without breaking the bank. Whether your business is just getting started, a going concern, or going great guns, favorable stories in the print, internet, and broadcast media about what you do and why it matters can catapult your business from obscurity into the spotlight.

Publicity is among the most powerful, affordable tactics in the marketing tool chest to gain awareness. Editorial coverage lends credibility to your efforts and extends your message to a wide audience of potential customers. Some publicity experts suggest that editorial coverage has three to six times the value of paid advertising, simply by the nature of the credibility associated with being in the news.

Public relations agencies are happy to support your success and charge worthy fees for their expertise. However, hiring a PR firm is a luxury that many small-business owners can ill afford, especially at the start. The good news is that do-it-yourself publicity tactics can deliver powerful results without spending big bucks.

As awareness of your enterprise grows, you can attract new customers to your door, invite new website visits, and lend momentum to the activity in your call center or e-mail inbox. You can also invite speaking engagements and other new business opportunities. And, one good media placement can lead to another. One day your story is featured within the pages of this Business Journal, and the next it could find its way to the pages of USA Today.

This column will provide information, tools, and resources to support your PR efforts so you can enjoy the rewards that flow from the impact of free publicity.

Over the months to come, this column will:

- Guide you through publicity mistakes to avoid so your efforts to earn media attention will have greater success.
- Share examples to illustrate what does and doesn't work.
- Offer insights from national publicity experts that highlight tried-and-true and new ways to spread the word and build your business.
- Invite and answer your questions.

This month, I'd like to begin the journey by helping you to read and write to succeed.

Read to succeed: Read newspapers, magazines and blog posts that are relevant to your business. Not familiar with blogs yet? These are websites that provide commentary or news on a particular subject such as food, politics, or local news. Some blogs function as personal online diaries. Blogs are part of a wider network of social media with the potential to build buzz in a big way. In May 2007, blog search engine Technorati was tracking more than 71 million blogs. They are not to be ignored.

Watch and listen to other media where your story would be a good fit. Pay attention to the people who write about your industry and your competitors. Armed with that insight, you are in a good position to suggest a story that will be right for the writer's beat and contribute something of value for those who are already paying attention.

This may seem basic, yet many publicity-seeking business owners tell reporters that they never read or watch their work, even though the business owners have an expectation that reporters will write about them. Media relations starts with a relationship, and that means paying attention to the efforts reporters make to educate, inspire, and serve their audiences. If everyone embraced this tip today, editorial decision makers everywhere would breathe a huge sigh of relief.

Write to succeed: The next step is to write to succeed. That means preparing press releases, pitch letters, meeting notices, contributed articles, and other content and sharing it with the right people at the media outlets you've selected to earn the attention you seek.

Business editors, for example, want to know about the numbers and why they matter. What is the magnitude and speed of your growth? What impact will this have on the local marketplace and beyond? How does this rate of growth compare with what others are experiencing in your industry? What trends are emerging that your product or service addresses in a refreshing way? Who are the people behind the story?

These are just a few of the questions to consider as you frame your own story for a reporter's consideration. The more you read to succeed, the more you can share your own story with this information in mind.

Your small business can take flight as a result of the momentum and impact of free publicity, provided you get into action.

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Make it easier to tell your story with a press kit

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

Business owners seeking to earn their own publicity can get tripped up before they begin. Getting up to speed about how to write a press release and how to prepare a press kit can be a bit overwhelming for the uninitiated. Take heart. With focused effort and attention, it doesn't have to be hard.

Begin with the knowledge that news stands on its own merit. The more timely, newsworthy, relevant, trend-worthy and hard-hitting your news, the better the likelihood that you'll earn the headlines you seek.

News hits you squarely between the eyes, kicks you in the stomach, makes you think, touches your heart, or kicks you in the behind. If the information you have to share fails to meet any of these criteria, you may not have a story that is worthy of media attention. No amount of fancy packaging is going to be the ticket to the front page of your hometown newspaper, business journal or media broadcast.

Present your news in a way that captures attention, compels editors and reporters to care, and serves the readers, listeners or viewers. And, provide the support and access necessary to support accurate, timely reporting.

If you are serious about earning favorable publicity over time, get serious about making it easy for reporters to tell your stories. Prepare a press kit that shares the highlights about you and your company in a clear, compelling way. And offer the convenience of 24/7 online access to this information.

The basic elements within your online press kit include the following:

- Your biography and/or your speaker sheet
- Your digital photo and/or digital photos of your products
- A backgrounder that explains the origins of your company, to whom you offer products or services, and the kinds of problems you solve for your customers
- A fact sheet that explains when your company launched, the progress it has made to date, the scope and reach of your products and services, awards and recognition you've earned, and other relevant facts
- Press releases with the latest news first
- Links to press coverage earned to date
- Testimonials from customers
- Your company logo
- Suggested interview questions
- Contact information to facilitate interview coordination.

When you make these elements readily available, you support every reporter's quest for accurate, timely and complete information. When interview opportunities occur, you can confirm that the reporter has accessed this information and use your time together to dig deeper into the story at hand and offer news the reporter can't get anywhere else.

Consider this list of "don'ts" and "do's" as you prepare to create a winning press kit of your own.

- Don't spend a fortune on elaborate press packages or feed the landfills with weight without substance.
- Don't contribute to the back problems with the heavy load that could be your press kit at the next industry trade show when an online press kit can do the job.
- Do put the most newsworthy news releases front and center.
- Do go beyond boilerplate and make your bio an interesting read. If your experience and credentials read like "blah, blah, blah" to you or your closest colleague, chances are they will be received in a similar way -- or worse -- by a busy reporter who is skimming for the most compelling facts.
- Do sit for a professional photograph (head shot) to put your best face forward. Label your photo with your full name, title, and the date to make it easy for editors to identify you. Digital images of at least 300 dots per inch (DPI) are best.
- Do identify your best customers and offer e-mail or phone access to make it easy for reporters to get in touch to capture their perspectives.
- Be prepared to identify your top competitors and how their offerings are contributing to the current dynamics in the marketplace.

When in doubt, check out the press kits of your top competitors or other businesses you admire. Then, craft materials that tell your own story in an even more compelling way.

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Free publicity when you become a published author

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

If you are weary of reading about your competitors in your hometown business journal or trade magazine because you have better ideas and more provocative perspectives to share, decide today to become a published author.

Your contributed article about a trend gathering speed, what it means to the local marketplace, and what business owners need to do to take advantage of the trend or new idea, based on your hard-won expertise, is a powerful way to be of service and earn expert status.

To begin, make a practice of reading these publications and following the work of the reporters who write about your business or industry. Then, get familiar with the editorial plans of the business journals, magazines, and/or trade journals that are the best fit for your expertise.

You can typically find the editorial calendar for each publication in the online media kits that are posted to each publication's website. If you come up empty, one quick telephone call or e-mail request to the reception desks at each publication should deliver the editorial calendars you seek.

Review the calendars to learn the topics, features, and focus areas each publication plans to highlight in the months ahead. Then, use that information to frame your own expertise and ideas as a powerful contributor to each publication's editorial plans.

For example, if your targeted business journal plans to focus on banking, investment, and finance several months from now and you do business in this space and have expertise to share, think about the topics you can offer for features within that special section that would shed light on an emerging trend that is gathering speed and one about which you are uniquely qualified to comment. Then, make your pitch.

A pitch letter offers a few brief, provocative, thoughtful, and engaging paragraphs that share your timely, relevant, and newsworthy article idea and why you would be a quality source for perspective. A pitch letter differs from a press release in that it is more conversational in tone and it is often personalized to the specific interest of the reporter or editor with whom you are corresponding.

Make sure the subject line of your e-mail offers a sassy, provocative topic such as "Financial Planner Offers Deadly Sins of Retirement Planning for Business Owners Who Forget to Plan" as opposed to a generic, boring message such as "Article Pitch for Your Consideration."

Pitch letters I send always end with this statement:

"I will follow up with you in a few days to check your interest in this article, unless I hear from you first. Thank you for your consideration."

Within a few days of sending your pitch -- and provided you have not heard from the editor -- give him or her a call to check for interest and fit. Then, ask for an assignment, confirm the word count or length the article should have, and ask for the deadline you must meet with your final draft.

Be sure to meet that deadline with a polished, well-written article that delivers the content you offered in your initial pitch. The article should include a bio box at the end that offers your name, website address, and telephone number to make it easy for the readers to get in touch with you. Include a color, high-quality digital headshot of at least 300 dots per inch so your photo can be published beside your commentary.

By sharing news the reader can use to run a better business, live a better life, or make a better informed decision, in a manner that is useful and nonpromotional, you reinforce your own position as an expert. By telling and not selling, you earn trust and reader confidence. This helps you earn new website visits, e-mail inquiries about your services, telephone calls to learn more, and/or speaking engagements to share your points of view with new audiences.

When your article is published, don't stop there. Share the online article link with your customers, prospects, and co-collaborators via an e-mail or your e-newsletter. Order a professional reprint to lend additional impact to your marketing collateral package. Frame the coverage for your retail window or corporate conference room.

Then, begin the article-pitching process again with the next business journal or trade publication. Remember, one good article placement can lead to another. When your prospects read your perspectives in a variety of venues, your visibility and credibility get a huge boost, and new engagements and opportunities very often follow.

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Online tools to use to promote your business

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

If earning favorable publicity for your business is a priority for the New Year, get acquainted with useful and affordable tools that will support your quest to find more publicity success with greater ease.

If you need to learn the difference between a press release that earns the ink and one that ends up in the round file, visit [publicityhound.com](#). Joan Stewart, aka The Publicity Hound, writes a free weekly e-zine that educates business owners about publicity. Her e-mail tutorial entitled "89 Reasons to Write a Press Release" is a powerful tool to support your do-it-yourself publicity success.

Do you want to be a published author? Get acquainted with some of the internet article directories where you can share your commentary, and categories where you can contribute perspectives. Here are three: [ezinearticles.com](#), [articleteller.com](#), and [ideamarketers.com](#). When you make submissions, you'll soon find that your name and articles will show up in "Google" searches to reinforce your expertise and drive traffic, e-mail, and other inquiries to your door.

While you are at it, pitch your brief, timely, and compelling article ideas to your local media. Don't just send them to the newsroom and hope for the best. Aim ideas to the reporters who cover your industry. Find their names and e-mail addresses at the end of articles they write, or visit the "contact us" section of each media outlet's website. One article in the local business journal or community newspaper can go a long way toward building the buzz about your business and your expertise in your own back yard.

If you want to create an affordable media list of your own that includes media outlets from beyond the local area, visit [medialistsonline.com](#) for an easy-to-use and cost-effective solution.

Do you want to be quoted in the national or trade media as an expert in your field? [PRLeads.com](#) is a service that puts you in touch with reporters who are seeking experts and may want to talk with you right now. Within the first 10 days of subscribing to ProfNet, a similar service for PR agencies, I earned five national media placements. Believe me. If you act quickly and specifically to address queries in progress, you will earn the ink.

Are you ready to launch an electronic newsletter to offer customers and prospects news they can use? Consider [constantcontact.com](#) as a powerful partner that makes it easy to stay in touch with customers and invite new engagements as a result of the quality information you provide over time.

Do you want to earn Puget Sound speaking engagements? Create a list of the top 10 local organizations that would gain value from hearing from you. Then, use the internet to identify the programming directors for each. Make your e-mail pitch to suggest several compelling and timely topics that would add value for the audience, along with a brief and compelling summary of your credentials. You'll be amazed what productive conversations will result from this well targeted effort. Once you start speaking and earning rave reviews from program directors and audience members, one engagement will lead to another.

Do you wish to earn speaking engagements beyond the Puget Sound region to share your expertise with the right audiences? Visit [speakermatch.com](#). This service funnels speaking engagements to your e-mail inbox for your consideration. Some are paid. Some are not. Either way, bringing your expertise to wider audiences is an efficient way to spread your news far and wide and invite new opportunities to be of service.

Have you been wondering how to launch a teleseminar series? Visit [freeconferencecall.com](#) to learn more. Your audio recordings are powerful proof of your speaking skill and can be used to support your quest to earn speaking engagements.

Are you trying to decide between launching a traditional brochure website or a blog? Visit [blogsquad.biz](#) for useful and free expert information to guide your choice.

Earning the buzz for your business and expertise doesn't have to be hard or expensive, though it does require focused time and effort. Be clear about the results you seek. Be systematic in your actions to earn credible, favorable headlines, interviews, and other reputation building placements. Engaging some or all of these powerful and affordable tools will help you earn more publicity success with greater ease.

NANCY JUETTEN is a publicist, newspaper columnist, speaker, and the author of the Media-Savvy-to-Go Publicity Toolkit. Visit [www.mainstreetmediasavvy.com](#) to learn more. Reach her at 425-641-5214 or by e-mail at [nancy@nsjmtg.com](#).

Got an interview? Get your sound bite in order

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

Business owners can make mistakes during media interviews in pursuit of favorable publicity and shoot themselves and their businesses in the foot in the process. Don't let this happen to you.

Before you participate in a print, radio, or TV interview, be clear about what you want your publicity to accomplish. How do you want to be of service? And how do you achieve that? Consider the specific ways you serve your various audiences and craft messages -- or sound bites -- to support each idea. Otherwise, you could generate hundreds of inquiries that waste your time without attracting the kind of business or connections you want.

Susan Harrow, strategic marketing and media coach and founder of PR Secrets (prsecrets.com), says sound bites are memorable statements that consist of stories, statistics, one-liners, tips, and analogies that are representative of what you want your audience to know. Your first line should serve as an audio headline that lets your audience know what you're going to discuss.

"If you say something that's a dial changer as soon as you open your mouth, you've lost your chance to connect with your audience," says Harrow.

Most of the typical mistakes that business owners and executives make during interviews can be easily overcome with thoughtful action, planning, and practice. Here are some of the most common errors and how to avoid them.

- Blaming the PR process for poor media results. Harrow says, "It is each executive's responsibility to be ready for the press and say the right things once the interview or appearance begins." Cut to the chase and be ready with a relevant story, one-liner, or statistic to make your point.
- Failing to practice. "Play with the scenarios you expect and throw in some kooky questions so you're ready for anything. Practice with colleagues and media coaches. And be coached to each particular media venue," Harrow says. "Being a guest on CNN is a completely different experience than being on Bill O'Reilly or 'Good Morning America.' Sound biting is a skill that takes time to learn and will help you get the results you want."
- Aiming too high without proper experience. "Reach for Oprah or David Letterman, but practice your interview skills close to home," Harrow says. "To do otherwise would be like trying to run a marathon without ever running a mile. "Start with your local, radio and TV stations and your city newspaper. Wouldn't you rather make mistakes with 10 people watching, reading, or listening rather than 10 million?"
- Answering every literal question. Harrow says, "You never have to answer a question that is posed to you. Rather, share the information you want the audience to know. Always be ready to transition immediately to the information you want others to remember. Saying something like, 'I don't know anything about that, but what I do know is ...' is a useful bridge statement to get to your key point, and it can be a lifesaver when you're in a live or taped radio or TV interview."
- Neglecting to correct inaccuracies on the spot. "Whether a reporter is pronouncing your name incorrectly or stating facts that are fiction," Harrow says, "it is your job to correct those items immediately in a neutral tone. Mark Twain once said that a lie will have traveled the globe twice before the truth has time to tie its shoes. Do your part on the spot to ensure accurate reporting -- and save your reputation."
- Failing to get to the point quickly. "Be prepared to share your sound bites consecutively, one right after the other because you may not be able to circle back a second time," Harrow advises. A four-minute TV segment zooms by in the blink of an eye. What can you say within moments that will deliver the message and the results you most want to achieve?
- The words and images don't match. "Everything needs to be in complete congruity from your words to your wardrobe to your website with the look, feel, and intention you are setting for your business. For example, if you are talking about delicious, premium chocolates, your wardrobe and appearance should be appealing and upscale to match the products about which you are speaking.

Being an effective spokesperson for your business can reflect well on your company's brand and reputation and invite new clients to do business with you. Get media-coached to fulfill this role well. To learn more about sound biting for publicity success, listen to a free teleconference on Feb. 5 at 10 a.m. with Harrow and me. Register at this link: prsecrets.com.

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Break through media clutter to get your story out

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

Here are three time-tested and proven ways to break through media clutter to tell your business story so others will listen.

Create proprietary research: Henry DeVries, founder of the New Client Marketing Institute, reports that an effective way to invite news coverage is to offer surprising numbers that relate to a trend gathering speed or a timely occasion.

DeVries says, "If you want to double your business, get inside your client's head through proprietary research and offer provocative results."

Here's how you apply this approach to your story's benefit. First, choose a topic that relates to the product or service you offer and execute a legitimate opinion survey.

Then, release the results to the media in a news release that offers your analysis. DeVries notes these examples of publicity-generating research in action, all taken from the pages of USA Today.

- If you like steamy sex conversations over dinner, you're probably single, according to a survey of 300 men and women conducted by Sfuzzi, a trattoria with locations in New York; Washington, D.C.; Dallas; and Houston.
- One in three people suffer pangs of guilt along with pangs of hunger for a snack. The survey was conducted for Continental Baking Co., the maker of Twinkies, Hostess Cupcakes, and Ho Hos.
- The lowly penny has a big following with the public, says a Gallup Poll. Of 750 adults asked if the penny should be discontinued, the con-cents-us was clear: 62 percent want to save the single-cent coin.

The poll was commissioned by Americans of Common Cents, a group organized by the zinc industry. Pennies are made mostly of zinc and use less than 3 percent copper.

Seattle Chocolate Co. initiated research among 300 women, ages 25 to 55, in April 2007 to find out why women choose chocolate.

Women choose chocolate to treat themselves, satisfy a craving for something sweet, indulge, or serve as the close to a tasty meal. Surprisingly, chocolate is the elixir to which 32 percent of women reach for stress relief; 15 percent use chocolate to forget worries; 9 percent choose chocolate because they like the packaging, and 5 percent reach for chocolate because it is a great way to start the day.

These data inform the company's 2008 advertising and reveal tidbits to guide publicity.

Leverage other major media: You can leverage coverage in mainstream media about your product or service to your company's benefit.

For example, Oprah recently did a show about happiness. The winner of her happiness survey was a woman who attributed her joy to the fact that she and her husband start each day by soaking in their hot tub and talking soon after the kids leave for school.

The Wall Street Journal did a story about how dual career couples overcome "the dead zone." This is that awkward time when both parties return home from tough days at work and have nothing to say to each other. The column offered a hot tub as a solution to that problem.

The New York Times did a story about "push presents." Apparently, husbands around the country are buying elaborate presents to reward wives for giving birth. Hot tubs were mentioned among the top gifts.

Alice Cunningham, co-owner of Olympic Hot Tub Co., has found ways to mention this press coverage in her sales meetings, customer newsletters, and local publicity activities to lend more support and invite more purchases.

Answer a problem: Riding on the relevance and timeliness of a business problem that is deeply felt by offering your expertise is another way to earn publicity.

For example, the first few months of a new year are an active time for employees to consider new jobs.

Many feel burned out from working in overdrive and want to find better positions that won't squeeze them dry. The experts at Working with Power LLC have taken guidance on how to win the talent war to the local and national media to offer new ways to address this universal pain.

Their answer is sustainable success achieved through new ways of doing business that involve asking the questions, "How can this be easier?" "How can we sustain this level of activity?" And, "What can we do to bring about more success with greater ease?"

Consider how what you offer can address a business problem right now. Bring your solutions to the right reporters and media outlets. In doing so, you are one step closer to earning the publicity you seek.

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The big importance of community newspapers

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

Microsoft and Yahoo. Cranium and Hasbro. Starbucks and Top Pot Donuts.

What do these companies have in common? They all earned big headlines recently for their plans to acquire, sell, or go national. Locals are captivated by stories that showcase hometown companies reaching new heights, sometimes against incredible odds.

Most small-business owners seldom reach the size or scope to face such dramatic turns of events and are happy to do business and earn a living outside the scope of cubicle nation. That, however, doesn't make them unworthy of news or feature coverage. The key is finding the right media avenues to tell the stories that are timely, newsworthy, relevant, and compelling, and leaving room for serendipity and media momentum to carry those stories forward.

Here is a story that had humble beginnings in a community newspaper and was powerful enough to invite the interest of the U.S. Secret Service and a six-year licensing deal to sell a line of toiletries at the White House Gift Shop.

[Entrepreneur.com](#) reported that Lesa and Rob Glucroft, of Calabasas, Calif., received a phone call from the Secret Service's licensing agent after he took notice of their toiletries business in a story in a community newspaper. The official asked if the Glucrofts would be interested in selling their lotions and soaps as "America's Legacy" at the White House Gift Shop. The deal is done. The 18-product toiletry line is called 1600 for Men to play off the White House address at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

This is a sweet deal for the Glucrofts that took root as a result of an article in a community newspaper. And their good news traveled to other major media, including CNN, the Los Angeles Times and Entrepreneur.com.

It just takes one perfect opportunity to make magic happen for a growing business, and that can happen in your own hometown if you find a winning way to tell your story.

Here are a few community newspapers that can shine a light on your winning ways.

- The Reporter Newspapers ([reporternewspapers.com](#)) reach readers in Auburn, Bellevue, Bothell/Kenmore, Covington/Maple Valley, Issaquah/Sammamish, Kent, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, Renton, Snoqualmie Valley and Sumner/Lake Tapps.
- The Journal Newspapers ([journal-newspapers.com](#)) reach readers in South Everett, Mukilteo, Mill Creek, Edmonds, Lynnwood, Shoreline, Northgate, North Seattle, Ballard, and the University District.
- The Robinson Newspapers ([robisonnews.com](#)) reach readers in Ballard, West Seattle, White Center, Burien, and Federal Way.

If you live and do business in these communities, think about story angles that would interest the readers in your own backyard. For example, The Bellevue Reporter did a feature about a local author who wrote a book about how to wade through the maze of home mortgage options to get the best deal. The article included useful tips to help readers make the best choice. This was a timely, newsworthy and relevant topic that was of great service to the readers, and the local author was photographed, book in hand, to add visual interest to the story.

Of course, the daily newspapers and business journals often showcase small-business owners in their ongoing retail coverage and entrepreneur features. The Puget Sound Business Journal, The Seattle Times, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, The News Tribune of Tacoma, The Herald of Everett and the Snohomish County Business Journal are just a few well-read newspapers to consider.

Here are steps to follow to earn the ink:

Study the online story archives for the publications in your back yard.

Identify the names and e-mail addresses of the reporters who write these features.

Prioritize which of these publications would be the perfect placement for you.

Start at the top of your list and make a pitch about why your company is on the leading edge of a trend gathering speed, making a meaningful contribution to the community, or making an impact in the marketplace that is worthy of note.

If your top priority media outlet passes on the story, move to the second publication on your priority list.

One big story in your back yard can lend powerful fuel to your lead generation machine. Phone calls, new website visits, e-mail inquiries about your products or services are some of the benefits that can flow your way when you earn favorable local publicity in your hometown media.

If a story in a community newspaper could pave a path for Lesa and Rob Glucroft to sign a six-year licensing deal with the White House Gift Shop, what might be possible for you? Think about your story and get into action to tell it. Great rewards are waiting.

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Use your web biography to garner more clients

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

If you snooze, you lose, or so the saying goes. And that is why having a snoozer for a website biography doesn't serve you or your growing business in the least.

Don't play safe and offer just the facts about your credentials, client list, and work experience. Go deeper and share your passion for the business, your personality, and unique perspectives that set you apart in the marketplace and make you memorable.

Often people tell me that they fear revealing too much personal information or sharing ideas that others would find offensive. Their fear causes them to wimp out and put us all to sleep with bland, boilerplate words that take up space without adding value.

It is far better to dazzle with a few concise, compelling, inviting statements than to overwhelm with paragraphs of "blah, blah, blah" that don't have a prayer of earning readership, attention, and action.

A large number of potential customers shop for products and services by visiting the internet first. A memorable, engaging biography can go a long way toward inviting the right telephone conversations, e-mail exchanges, and new business meetings to bring about more perfect engagements and shopping-cart clicks with the right people and products.

We can't be all things to all people. We have to be the right things to the right people. While I appreciate the temptation to keep things bland and boring in order to appeal to the greatest number of prospects, the flaw in this reasoning is that you may end up spending way too much time courting the wrong prospects. That doesn't serve anyone well.

When writing a biography for your website, take a moment to shake things up a bit to make a winning impression that will earn you points on the "trust, like, and respect" meter. Yes, please impress with prestigious college degrees, decades of business advisory experience, and important brand-name companies on your client list if that kind of information is important to your ideal clients. Then, share your track record of great results in a manner that makes prospects want to reach out and take your hand to journey forward together.

Tell stories about your proudest career or life accomplishments. Demonstrate how your counsel helped clients exceed their wildest performance expectations. Share a quote that inspires you to do your best work. Reveal something about the passion you bring to each client relationship so people will want to meet you to continue the conversation.

And don't forget to have a little fun if that fits with your company's brand and image. If you feel stuck and in need of inspiration, answer these questions:

- What was your "aha" moment when you knew that doing what you do now would be your path in life?
- What are you committed to?
- What are the most meaningful results you bring about or problems you solve for your clients?
- What do clients say about what you do and what it means to them?
- What five things would others be surprised to learn about you that are also relevant to your business?
- If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why?
- What is the book you've read that has had the biggest impact on your life and work?
- If you could be a TV character from any of the shows you've watched during your lifetime, who would that be and why?

I went shopping for a home stager a few months ago. I was struck by the fun biographical information Dennis Conner of designdialogue.com shared in his bio.

Even as a young child, Conner was aware of his environment. He noticed that by pushing furniture and accessories around, he could affect how his space felt. This passion for three-dimensional space has been a driving force behind his career and life choices. After all these years, he's still pushing furniture around.

Those revealing, passionate, playful words compelled me to pick up the phone and engage his services.

What kinds of short and engaging stories can your bio tell about you and your business that will compel the right people to do business with you? Have some fun as you put pen to paper, and let your authenticity shine. Your business will be better for it.

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How 'American Idol' can teach lessons about your business

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

Whether or not you are among the more than 22.8 million viewers who tuned in each week, there are powerful publicity lessons to be gleaned from "American Idol."

-- Don't let questionable photographs of you show up on the internet to potentially compromise your reputation or your standing among the voting or buying public.

David Hernandez was an exotic dancer before he made his way to the "American Idol" stage. Some say that a scandal just brings more attention. That may be true. The real question is whether scandal is what is called for when seeking a title such as "American Idol" or running a winning business.

-- Make your talent relevant and memorable.

If you sing "Moon River" today, deliver it in a way that takes it to a new place so the message will carry, rather than fall flat.

What is cool, compelling, different, memorable, and newsworthy about what you do and how you do it? If you can't figure out a way to set yourself apart, dig deeper and wait until you can.

- Find your own voice. Another "me too" product doesn't stand a chance in a contest like "American Idol" or in today's demanding marketplace. There is only one Janis Joplin, one Celine Dion, and one Stevie Wonder. Don't try to duplicate something so magnificently different already and run the risk of being viewed as a poor imitation. Run your own race. Stand out on your own merits.
- Be gracious. When voted off the show, contestants owe it to themselves and their fans to be appreciative of the opportunity, even in the face of great disappointment.

In your business, be prepared to be gracious when reporting good or bad news to the media, knowing that how you deliver the news reflects just as much on how you do business as the news you are sharing.

-- Smile for the camera. Look like you are happy to be on stage. Amanda Overmyer, the female rocker, is a fabulous performer, but she looks uncomfortable in the spotlight. A smile would go a long way to help viewers to connect with her.

In your business, remember that people do business with those they like, trust, and respect. An engaging smile is attractive, warm, and engaging and goes a long way to set a winning tone on the "like, trust, and respect" meter.

- Get your sound bites in order, and don't forget the lyrics. When the cameras and microphones are on you, don't talk about how interviews are tough and how you need to get better as "Idol" hopeful Jason Castro revealed on more than one occasion. Use your time in the spotlight to say something favorable and connect with the audience so you can make progress in the court of public opinion or at the cash register.
- Blend all media to tell your story. With "American Idol," you watch the program. You use your phone to vote. You visit www.americanidol.com to build community among other fans of the show. The traditional print and broadcast media are covering every angle of every story about every contestant as is the online media.

Find ways to make use of all available forms of media, from one screen to another, from one page to another, from one broadcast media to another, to bring your brand alive and extend its reach in your own backyard and well beyond.

-- Don't share boring or unflattering stories or anecdotes in your bio that don't support your intention to be the rock star that you intend to be, whatever shape that takes for you and your business.

When preparing your bio for "American Idol" or the media, consider sharing information that reinforces your strengths in the role you most want to play in life and work.

Consider what kind of rock star you intend to be in your business, and apply these publicity lessons learned from "American Idol" to your benefit.

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Use social networking sites to fuel your publicity efforts

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#)

If you receive multiple e-mails to "link in" and "connect" and are in the habit of clicking "delete" as soon as these messages reach your in-box, you might be in a social networking fog. Here are simple steps to dip your toe into the social networking waters, and share examples of the kinds of results you can enjoy in your small business to lend fuel and impact your do-it-yourself publicity efforts.

Benefits of social networking: For business owners seeking to build buzz, expand their influence, and serve others in their own back yards and beyond, social networking can pack a powerful punch because the search engines engage to spread your message far and wide. Social networking can be a powerful tool to enhance expert status, drive website or blog traffic, and invite new opportunities to contribute. Social networking is also a direct way to connect with others without having to rely on reporters to carry your message forward. In today's ever-changing media environment, this benefit alone is enough to persuade you to jump into the social networking waters with both feet.

What is social networking? Social networking is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and/or social contacts by making connections through individuals. With the power of the internet, it is easier than ever for people to make contacts with others who would be good for them to know, but whom they would be unlikely to meet otherwise. Connecting in the spirit of making a contribution, rather than blatant selling, is an essential ingredient to social networking success. When readers gain value from your comments, they visit your profile to learn more about you, and new business is a common and welcome result.

Websites dedicated to social networking include Friendster, LinkedIn, Spoke, Tribe Networks, and BizNik, among others. BizNik is committed to connecting owners of personal businesses. With 5,000 Seattle members and 12,000 members total to date, BizNik is very early in its quest to serve 27 million such businesses. Founder Dan McComb says that getting noticed is the No. 1 problem small businesses face. BizNik is an online community that makes it easy for business owners to connect, get noticed, and do business.

Too busy for social networking? Think again. Many people tell me they are too busy doing everything else in their business to correspond online with people in this way. Frankly, I was in the same boat. Still, I made the choice to dip my toe into the social networking waters in March of this year to see what magic might manifest in my business.

Here are the simple steps I took to test the social networking waters with BizNik. To begin, I set up an online profile, introduced myself to the community, and invested just 15 minutes daily reading others' posts, contributing ideas and tips to address others' questions, and connecting with and building my own online network.

I linked my blog to my profile to invite more readership, posted a number of archived articles about do-it-yourself publicity to empower the members of this community to build the buzz about their businesses, and earned an "expert" badge for my profile in the process.

Powerful results: Since joining, hundreds of BizNik members have visited my online profile. Hundreds have read and rated my article submissions favorably. I've had scores of quality telephone and e-mail exchanges with people with interest in my products and services. At least a half-dozen have elected to do business with me. And, I've connected with a fabulous virtual assistant who is making my business run with more ease. Best of all, unique visits to my blog have reached an all-time high. My name and expertise earn high rankings on Google because the people who run BizNik and the other social networking sites are well skilled in search engine optimization.

Next steps: If benefits such as these are what you seek, consider what you want to accomplish in your business with social networking. Then, choose a site that makes sense for your business by visiting a few, talking to your most trusted colleagues and co-collaborators, and doing your own Google searches to explore your options. Then, make the commitment to allocate just 15 minutes daily to make contributions. By giving first before you get, you will find -- as I have -- that you'll connect with more of the right people, invite more quality engagements, and enjoy more success with greater ease. It's a beautiful thing.

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Easy ways to learn where to call in pursuit of free publicity

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#) Guest Columnist

If earning media attention for your products, expertise, or services is a priority, consider three useful resources to help you connect readily with the right reporters, freelancers, and editorial decision makers to earn expert status or bring your products into the media spotlight.

Help a reporter out: Stories are in development every day, and reporters need ready access to experts, products, and perspectives to lend impact to the news at hand. One way to contribute is to subscribe to a free media query service launched by Peter Shankman called [helpareporterout.com](#). In exchange, you receive three to five e-mails each day that outline the specifics reporters are seeking for stories in development right now.

If you are among the first people to respond to calls for experts in a timely, compelling, and provocative way on or before the deadline, you can be on your way toward earning the publicity you seek. More than 12,000 members — reporters and experts alike — have signed up to benefit from this free service since it launched early in 2008.

Reading these leads also offers a powerful lesson in how to frame your own story to be newsworthy and relevant in the context of what is going on in the nation and the world right now. Recently, there has been a flurry of interest in stories seeking experts about how to retire in turbulent times, “staycation” rather than vacation, and how to recession-proof your business. With quick and compelling replies to each, clients large and small have seen their media placements grow. If the commentary and ideas you share are on target, you’ll earn a place in stories soon to debut. It’s just that simple.

Once you earn success with your first few media placements, you’ll be persuaded of the value of this free service, and you’ll want to go deeper in your media relations efforts.

PR Leads: Connect to even more media requests by subscribing to PR Leads. This affordable service (\$99 each month) puts you in touch with reporters writing stories for major publications such as The Wall Street Journal, CNN, and Newsweek, as well as Redbook and Glamour, who need to quote experts like you. You receive their names and e-mail addresses and their story angles so you can contact them.

Gift List Media: Do you have a product that is perfectly timed for feature in the holiday gift guides of national magazines? If so, consider a subscription to [giftlistmedia.com](#). This service puts you in touch with the decision makers who are responsible for choosing products to feature in holiday gift guides. You receive their names and e-mail addresses, their story angles, and so much more. This database includes print contacts at magazines and the top 250 daily newspapers, wires, syndicate and news service contacts, and television producers at national network, cable and syndicated television shows, plus national radio. Features for the December holidays are targeted, as well as year-round product coverage. A subscription runs about \$549.

Last month, I initiated my subscription and immediately researched the list to find a decision maker at O magazine. With my first pitch, I enlisted immediate interest. Minutes later, the editor asked for product samples. Days later, the editor asked for a second shipment of product samples for a product tasting with none other than Oprah herself. Now, Seattle Chocolate Company’s Extreme Dark Truffle Bars to benefit breast cancer charities are slated to be featured in the October issue of O magazine during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Great rewards are waiting when you jump into the do-it-yourself publicity pool with both feet using affordable and powerful tools such as these. Come on in. The water is fine.

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<http://seattle.bizjournals.com/seattle/stories/2008/07/28/smallb4.html>

Get your story pitch turned into a home run by the media

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) - by [Nancy Juetten](#) Guest Columnist

The local media pay attention when [Microsoft](#), [Starbucks](#), Boeing, or [Washington Mutual](#) issues a press release. This isn't necessarily so for your small business.

Press releases can be effective for sharing personnel announcements, offering award news, and alerting the media about upcoming business events. For smaller companies, press releases are typically not the tool of first choice when earning prominent media attention is the goal. What does work is a targeted pitch to the reporter at the media outlet that represents the perfect placement for the story.

A story pitch is a targeted, customized message you send to a specific reporter who writes for a media outlet that is well targeted to the people you most want to reach. The pitch makes clear why your story is something to consider for a story now more than ever. It is not a boilerplate message you send to every media outlet with one click.

Your pitch makes clear why your story is timely, newsworthy, relevant, local, and — most importantly — interesting. And it begins with a sassy headline in the subject line of your e-mail that is sure to invite attention. “Story pitch for your consideration” doesn't qualify.

When you start a pitch by making clear that you intend to be of service to a reporter's quest for remarkable stories that are a perfect fit for what he or she writes about or needs right now, you set the stage to earn attention for your own story to be told.

Here are two brief examples of story pitches that delivered the ink in a holiday gift guide, a community newspaper, and a major daily newspaper. You can see how a few well chosen words can enlist interest and action.

- Here's an item for holiday gift guide consideration that combines two powerful trends into one elegant, affordable and functional solution. The Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday, July 26 that luxury goods — including purses — are still hot, even in today's troubled economy. The report called attention to the Hermes Crocodile Kelly Bag, priced at \$30,000, which is earning new buyers every day. And, did you know that the Today Show reported that the bottoms of purses are among the “12 most germiest” places on earth?

Newcastle resident and founder of ZookHooks Inc. Alexis Meisel is known among women who attend local networking events as “The Hook Lady.” She is a 35-year-old MBA who left her position working as an economist gathering data for the consumer price index to launch a company that adds theft and germ protection to handbags. The product? A little gadget from the 1950's called a purse hanger.

- If you are looking for a great retail story to tell, I can help. Olympic Boat Center just filed for bankruptcy. Gas prices are at an all-time high. Would it come as a surprise to you to learn that a Seattle-based woman-owned boat company just moved to much larger digs and is having a record year, even in the face of such dire news?

So far, this first pitch earned the attention of the Newcastle News, with thousands of readers in the business owner's own backyard, and the attention of a New York City fashion blogger who contributes commentary to The Today Show and other national talk shows.

This second pitch earned a front page story on the business section of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer the week after Seafair.

These examples demonstrate that getting to the meat of the matter in a compelling, credible and engaging way with a few lines of text really can do the job far better than a standard press release.

Follow this recipe for crafting a story pitch, and you will be well served:

Target your story to the reporter who writes about your category of business in the media outlet that reaches the customers you most want to influence with your message.

Watch the headlines in the local or national media for well documented trends gathering speed and what they mean for the marketplace.

Share how your expertise, product or service fits in and why it matters, now more than ever.

Isn't now a perfect time to cook up your own local publicity success story? If not now, then when? Only you can decide.

NANCY JUETTEN is a publicist, newspaper columnist, speaker and the author of the Media-Savvy-to-Go Publicity Toolkit. Visit [localprforme.com](#) to learn more. Get in touch with her at 425.641.5214 or by e-mail at [nancy@nsjmkgt.com](#).

SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Learn how to generate buzz for your business

“There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.”
— Oscar Wilde

If you could turn to the Snohomish County Business Journal every month and learn powerful tips and proven strategies to build your business and profit from the power of publicity without spending a fortune, would you be interested? If you answered “yes,” look no further. The new “Media-Savvy-to-Go” column will help you get this job done to your reputation and business-building advantage.

Every growing company has a story to tell, yet not every growing company has the budget to retain an outside PR firm to tell it. This column will show you how to tell your own winning story without breaking the bank.



Nancy S. Juetten
Media-Savvy-To-Go

Introducing Nancy S. Juetten

Nancy S. Juetten has parleyed her Bellevue-based business — Nancy S. Juetten Marketing — into one of the region’s most successful enterprises by helping other companies tell their stories and build their brands.

Her practical insights into how to publicize a company’s products, services and achievements in the news media convinced us that she had valuable views that could benefit the readers of the Snohomish County Business Journal. We hope you enjoy her commentary.

— John Wolcott, SCBJ Editor

Step by step, month by month, you’ll learn how to prepare your news, share your news and/or expertise, and earn the headlines you need to spread your story far and wide. Plus, you’ll learn about plenty of useful and often free resources to help you get the mission accomplished. When you get into action, your brand, reputation and business will grow. You’ll soon learn that good publicity can last forever, and you’ll wonder why you didn’t begin sooner.

But don’t just start writing and sending press releases all over town, the Internet or the world without first determining the current “buzz” about your company and what you most want to accomplish as a result of your publicity efforts. First, take the temperature to see if you are sizzlin’ or fizzlin’.

Visit www.Google.com to discover the current “buzz” about your name and company. Better yet, visit www.linkpopularity.com to learn how popular your Web site is according to Google, MSN.com and Yahoo.com. If the only thing that comes up is the 5K race you ran three years ago, you’ve got some work to do. And, if you don’t yet have a Web site, add that to your list of essential tasks

to accomplish. But before you do that, ask yourself a few key questions:

- What do you want to be known for?
- What qualifies you?
- What is special and different about the way you do business?

- Why is what you do or offer timely, newsworthy, trendworthy or relevant to the news media today?
- What do you want “Google” of www.linkpopularity.com to reveal about your company and name six months and one year from now?

If you are thoughtful and strategic about your storytelling approach, you’ll be in a much better position to evaluate your return on investment in time, creativity and resources that you apply toward your media relations program.

Let’s face it: Any new marketing or public relations initiative needs to prove its value in the form of results to compel you to apply precious resources to the task. Be clear about what you want your public relations program to accomplish for your growing business. Always align your actions and storytelling with your desired results.

Next month, this column will address some proven ways to earn editors’ attention. In the meantime, keep reading the newspapers and watching the local and national news media. You’ll need to gain familiarity with the work of the reporters who write about your industry if you hope to influence them to tell your story. And if you have a burning media relations question to ask, get in touch.

Nancy S. Juetten owns Nancy S. Juetten Marketing Inc., a public relations and marketing communications agency. She also is the author of the “Media-Savvy-to-Go” publicity tips booklets and workbook. She can be reached by calling 425-641-5214, by sending e-mail to nancy@nsjmktg.com or by going online to www.nsjmktg.com.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

Published November 2006

Deadly sins of media relations — and why you should avoid them

The most important thing to keep in mind about media relations is that business periodicals, newspapers and broadcast media are in business to inform and serve their readers and viewers. Your task is to share timely, newsworthy, relevant, trendworthy and local story ideas for editorial consideration that do exactly that.

In broad terms, reporters are interested in writing about:

- Breaking news that will impact their readers or viewers in a meaningful way.
- Emerging trends and their relevance in the local marketplace.
- Local examples of people and companies at the leading edge of these trends.
- Much-anticipated new products that have the potential to change the way we live, play and do business.
- Stories that touch our pocketbooks, our hearts, our minds — or that stop us in our tracks.

To serve these interests, offer news that reporters and editors can't get anywhere else. Offer access to the deal makers and experts. Offer compelling visuals to bring the story to life. Offer proof of why your story is an example of a big trend gathering speed and why you are qualified to comment about it. Offer ideas that lend impact to special editorial sections. And, provide concise, quotable, thoughtful commentary that respects pressing deadlines.

As business owners, we know that attentive client service is an essential ingredient for successful and lasting relationships. The same is true when engaging in media relations. Reporters and editors are your most important customers because they have so much influence to share your stories with their audiences. Treat them with respect, honor their deadlines and other requests in a timely manner, and anticipate their needs as best you can.

Address reporters by name, and spell their names correctly. Be familiar enough with their work to know what will interest them. Make it easy for reporters to tell your story. Cover the "who, what, why, when, where and how" and, most importantly, "why" they should care. Make it easy for reporters to get in touch with you by phone and e-mail. And always ask if there is more you can do to be of service.

Now that you know what many editors and reporters are after, consider some of the deadly sins of media relations.



**Nancy S.
Juetten**
Media-Savvy-To-Go

■ Don't ever say to a reporter, "I'm unfamiliar with your publication or your work." These people work grueling hours against ongoing and demanding deadlines to serve their readers and viewers. You owe them the courtesy of your attention to their work. Without that, why should they pay attention to you?

■ Don't ever call reporters or editors and say, "Did you receive my press release?" This wastes their time and adds no value to the effort. Rather, call to say that new information has come to light since you issued that press release, and you are calling right away so the reporter can decide the best way to proceed. Take this approach provided that new information has truly come to light.

■ Don't ever say, "My firm buys a lot of advertising with your newspaper," to imply that the publication owes you a story as a result. Advertising and editorial departments are treated separately at most quality media outlets.

■ Don't say, "I sent my press release to you last week" and ask, "When are you going to run it?" Good stories stand on their own merit. There are no guarantees for coverage.

■ Don't call reporters on deadline and expect them to be happy to hear from you.

■ Don't share information that hasn't been spell-checked and double-checked for accuracy. That means checking phone numbers, names and addresses. The news business is all about accuracy and quality information. Don't compromise on either.

■ Don't mistake "puff" for news. Always make it clear why readers or viewers should care. Without that crucial ingredient, you might as well just shell out for paid advertising.

■ When asked for a quote, don't blow it. A comment that starts with, "We are just so excited ..."; "We are pleased"; or "We are delighted to be nominated ..." takes up space without adding valuable content. When given the chance to say something, offer a strategic comment. Say something meaningful or memorable. Make your words count for something. And don't make yourself sound like a cheerleader for the high school football team.

■ Don't send in an unflattering photo of yourself or your product and expect either to look better in newsprint. Newsprint is the unkindest paper of all. Hire a professional photographer to best represent your products and put your best face forward.

If you keep these deadly sins in mind and remember always to be of service to the reporters and editors you depend upon to share and deliver your news, you and your stories will be well served.

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SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Media relations tactics that deliver big bang for effort with very few bucks

As 2006 fast comes to a close, it's time to determine your top three, high-return lead-generation methods and evaluate how consistently you apply them.

So often, we make single attempts at any variety of marketing or public relations tactics, only to abandon them before giving them the benefit of consistent application. Let 2007 be the year you apply focus, discipline and consistency to the top three, high-return lead-generation methods in your business-building toolbox so you can reap the greatest rewards.

To that end, here are 10 powerful media relations tactics for growing businesses serious about generating quality leads.

■ Write how-to articles for the media that have the greatest influence with your ideal customers. The value of editorial placements is said to have three times the value of advertising placements. How-to articles reach a wide audience of decision makers and decision influencers with one pass. They serve as credible, affordable brochures and often reside online indefinitely. They demonstrate your expertise in a way that inspires quality leads to get in touch with you to learn more. And, business journals are eager to receive your commentary and perspective to lend insight to their editorial plans, as long as you do so in a manner that delivers your expertise without directly selling your company.

■ Post your how-to articles in the online article directories, such as www.ideamarketers.com, www.articleteller.com and www.ezinearticles.com. E-newsletter publishers access these article directories for quality content, offering you the promise of potentially worldwide reach of your expertise and contact information.

■ Leverage your "how to" articles in the press with speeches and radio interviews. Media momentum can be a powerful thing. Early this year, I wrote an article for a marketing trade newspaper. A radio show producer invited me to be interviewed on his show after reading it. The radio interview helped promote one of my local talks, which, in turn, created interest in my services and generated several new engagements.

■ Serve as an expert to reporters that write about your industry. Newspaper editors want to hear from experts who have timely, newsworthy, relevant and trendworthy ideas to share. Offer yourself as a quality, credible resource to the right reporters and ask for the opportunity to share your points of view. Prepare a biography that makes clear the areas about which you can comment



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with impact, credibility and insight and your qualifications. Share it with the special section editors and beat reporters so they'll know to call you the next time they write about your business or industry.

■ Launch and sustain a quality e-newsletter to stay in touch with interested potential clients. The beauty of e-newsletters is that prospects ask to be added to your distribution list because they are interested in what you have to offer, though they may not be ready to buy right now. As long as you keep the ratio of information sharing at 80 percent and selling at 20 percent, chances are good that your company will be the first that readers will call when they are ready to buy. Your Web site visits, e-mails and phone inquiries will escalate in direct response to the effort.

■ Stage Webinars, teleseminars or small-scale free or low-cost seminars to make your expertise readily available to prospects. It is efficient to share your information in a one-to-many fashion. Group settings are comfortable for evaluators. One-to-one sessions are more like sales pitches, and that can be uncomfortable for those who are not ready to buy now.

■ Share meeting notices with the local papers. The exposure to their readerships brings your message to a wide audience of potential event guests. If you'd like a list of the best 27 media and online contacts to get this accomplished, visit my Web site to read more about Media-Savvy-to-Go Special Report No. 3.

■ Share valuable information by request. When folks read your materials, they engage more deeply with your expertise. That makes them want to engage you for a fee. Try it. It works really well. That is why so many businesses do it. And remember: This isn't sales information. It is useful information that leverages your expertise. That is an important distinction.

■ Write press releases about grand openings, staff additions/promotions and other happenings at your company, targeting the reporters who cover your industry. If you want to learn 89 reasons to write a press release, Joan Stewart offers a free online course to jump-start your learning. Register at www.publicityhound.com.

■ Enter award contests that are well supported by the media. Earning "best company to work for" recognition, a place on the list of most powerful U.S. women in banking or "company of the year" honors is a great way to earn media attention as well as new inquiries about both your services and employment opportunities while enhancing your reputation.

These activities require time but not much money, and they can deliver meaningful lead-generation results. My advice is to choose the top three tactics that appeal most to your skills, talents and passions, and get into action today. Your focused, disciplined and consistent media relations efforts can set the stage for the new year to be your best ever.

Nancy S. Juetten owns Nancy S. Juetten Marketing Inc. and is the author of the "Media-Savvy-to-Go" publicity tips booklets and workbook. Subscribe to her free "Media-Savvy-to-Go" e-zine by visiting www.mediasavvytogo.com. Contact her by calling 425-641-5214 or sending e-mail to nancy@mediasavvytogo.com.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Jump-start PR know-how and results in short order

It's a brand new year. You've got a fresh slate to turn your business into a publicity machine that generates favorable headlines that shine a light on your winning ways. In doing so, you can get known, build buzz, earn credibility and generate a path of qualified leads to your door. What growing business doesn't want more of all of that?

If you are a newbie to public relations and need to jump-start your PR know-how, I invite you to subscribe to some excellent and FREE e-zines that will deliver useful, powerful and proven ideas to your e-mail box on a regular basis.

E-zine is short for "electronic magazine." It offers news your readers (clients, prospects and referral sources) can use to run better businesses or live better lives as a result of your expertise. It can be as simple as a free e-mail tip sent to a list of people who have given you permission to market to them online (absolutely no spamming!) or as elaborate as a longer electronic newsletter.

E-zines are powerful because they keep you in front of your audience 26 times a year if you send them biweekly and 52 times a year if you send them weekly. That means you have 52 chances to connect with your readers with quality tips, information and resources while using 20 percent of the content to sell your products and services.

Here are two of my favorite e-zines: www.publicityhound.com and www.prsecrets.com. Make a habit of reading them regularly. You'll learn a lot and be inspired and equipped to get into action with new ideas and resources to catapult your growing business to a higher level of awareness and success.

Speaking of e-zines, do you write one of your own? If not, give that consideration. Mine is among the most powerful tools in my lead-generation toolbox. If you need help identifying a supplier, consider www.constantcontact.com and www.aweber.com. Both come highly recommended by e-zine publishers from coast to coast and around the world who reach audiences large and small.

These e-zine authors have become my colleagues and co-collaborators. In preparing this column, I asked The Publicity Hound Joan Stewart and media coach and marketing strategist Susan Harrow of PR Secrets to share their best tips to help business owners jump-start their 2007 publicity results. Here is what they had to say:

Joan Stewart:

Many businesses, from one-person shops to big corporations, should start blogging. The search engines love blogs, and blogs pull in traffic like a magnet and draw visitors to your Web site. If you don't know what blogs are or how to start one, do a search on Google and get as smart as you can as fast as you can, or your competitors will leave you in the dust.



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Start building valuable relationships with media people, and identify at least one media contact at each media outlet where you want coverage. Ask, “How can I help you?” Listen. Then do what they say.

Don’t limit your publicity activities only to traditional media. Bloggers, podcasters and other “new media” are in a position to spread the word about you much more quickly than traditional media can, and to a wider audience.

Susan Harrow:

Your headline dictates whether a reporter will read your release. The press releases that make the media call are those that incorporate a strong story idea about a topic that includes, but is not directly about, your business.

One of my copywriters came up with this headline: While most kindergartners are picking their noses and feeding their broccoli to the dog, 6-year-old Jace Richards was publishing his first book.

Do you notice how specific that is? Most publicists and people doing their own PR make the mistake of creating a headline that’s big and broad. Wrong. Make it small and specific. The narrower your topic, the more arresting it will be.

If you are among the many who want to get on the “Oprah” TV show, visit online at www2.oprah.com/tows/intheworks/tows_works_main.jhtml to get a sneak peek at what “Oprah” producers are looking for. Tie your story, service, product or cause directly into what they need, and you’ve got a chance of getting on the show. Submit your 2,000-character (about 350-word) idea through the Web site. Producers are standing by. One client of mine got called back within an hour.

When you submit an idea to “Oprah,” never pitch yourself, your product, service or cause. Pitch a topic that will resonate with her audience. Map out who the guests will be, how you imagine the segment to unfold and what visuals you plan to use. The producers need to SEE your idea in order to understand if it’s right for them or not. Make sure to include your credentials — why you and only you would be the best guest for the topic you’re pitching.

As for my own best advice to you, here it is: Brainstorm your own “top 10” list of media outlets that would offer the most credible and far-reaching platform from which to highlight what is special about your expertise and your growing business. Pay attention to these media outlets throughout the year. Ask each for their editorial calendar and identify how your own story fits into their editorial plans. Then, get into action to suggest winning story ideas that will serve their audiences and bring attention to your own company’s winning ways.

One year from now, with your diligence and follow-up, you might find that you’ve earned quality media placements in many of your top-10 media outlets. Then, you’ll be convinced beyond measure that public relations really does pack a powerful punch to help you get known, build media buzz, earn credibility and generate a path of quality leads to your door. With these benefits well within reach, you’ll wonder why you didn’t begin your public relations effort sooner.

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SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Journey from ‘desperate housewife to PR diva’

It’s February — a time of full hearts, love and gratitude. That’s why — after writing this column for four months and bringing what I hope are useful tips, resources and suggestions to help you put publicity to work for your growing business — I thought I’d take a moment to tell you a little about my own humble beginnings as a business owner and how that experience factors into my work and service to you.

I often quip that I transitioned from desperate housewife to PR diva in nine life-altering steps. My public relations, publicity coaching and information products business was born in February 2001 out of a desire so simple that it might surprise you: I wanted to earn money to buy better groceries.

Up until May of 1997, I worked my way up the corporate ladder in a variety of marketing, promotion and advertising positions that required creativity, resourcefulness and decision making to influence bottom-line results. When my son was born, I left the work force for a year to learn how to be a mom and serve as the chief domestic officer of our household.

Among my many duties was figuring out how to make our household budget stretch to meet all of our needs with half the money. I wanted to buy Nabisco brand Wheat Thins for \$2.99 a box but chose to buy two boxes of generic brand wheat crackers for 99 cents instead. What I soon found out was that the savings didn’t compensate for the lack of flavor. My public relations business was my ticket to buy better groceries.

Today, I’ve got wonderful clients with great stories to tell, a regular newspaper column to share my expertise and wonderful prospects. And, I’m too busy to cook. This just goes to show that you can make your way in the world doing what you love if you just have the courage to pursue your passion.

I’ve been giving a lot of thought to why business owners want publicity in the first place. It occurred to me that business owners don’t want publicity at all. What they want is to be seen, heard and celebrated in their own back yards.

As business owners, we all make great sacrifices. We work long hours. We worry about a million things that make us long for our days as employees when things were so much easier. We wonder if our businesses will ever achieve “going concern” status, or if we will forever be destined to worrying about how to make a go of these businesses we’ve started, likely on a hope, a dream and a prayer.

When you earn recognition in the hometown media for your hard-won business success, expertise and community contributions, more of the right people show up so you can do more of what you love to do. This is perhaps the most powerful benefit anyone can hope to enjoy from the credibility and impact that editorial coverage provides.



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When I started my business, I wanted the chance to dance with clients who would give me the opportunity to tell their stories to the local media. Soon, I was dancing as fast as I could to juggle multiple engagements and deliver “big ink and air” to clients whose success or failure depended on attracting and selling to the right clients. Their success escalated, and mine grew, too.

Once business was booming for my clients, my PR services weren't as crucial. Clients were booked solid with plenty of quality leads in the pipeline. It was a beautiful thing. Referrals from satisfied clients flowed because I earned the reputation as the PR expert who could bring them into the spotlight and help make their dreams come true. Clients were happy because they could re-deploy dollars formerly allocated to public relations to other, even more pressing, business initiatives.

What I've learned on my own entrepreneurial journey is that life is the sweetest and most rewarding when I get to spend the majority of my time doing work I love to do. As business owners, we owe it to ourselves to do the work for which we are most qualified and passionate for the customers who need and want what we have to offer.

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Don't let faulty networking short-circuit success

How you meet and greet new people shapes your personal brand and reputation long before your successes, community contributions and stories earn editorial consideration by the media.

Everyone you meet around town at networking functions, conferences and other venues is a potential colleague, co-collaborator or client. And everyone you meet has his/her own extended network of people who form an inner circle that could potentially invite you in. It is essential to put your best face forward when you meet new people. Lead with your eyes and ears to make a winning connection.

To get the inside scoop on winning ways to connect at networking events, I consulted with Zita Gustin. Gustin is the executive managing director of the Snohomish Chapter of the eWomenNetwork, which will meet for lunch March 2 at the Everett Holiday Inn. Gustin is a master of the art of networking and speaks often to professional groups and the media to help others improve their skills and results.

Gustin says — and we all know — that some people are skilled at making quality connections that result in authentic relationships built on trust, admiration and respect. When they need advice, information or referrals, they count on their own inner circle to tell them the truth and help them get what they need. Best of all, they are happy to return the favor. This translates to greater success with ease and speed. That counts for a lot in today's information-overloaded world in which time matters just as much as money.

“The best advice I can offer to improve networking skills is to become a connector,” Gustin said. “If you spend more time focused on how you can help others achieve their goals, you will find many unexpected gifts and rewards bestowed upon you.

“To become a connector, learn to listen more than you talk. To understand what other people need, look them directly in the eye and hear what they are saying. Stay focused and present while you are listening, and people will marvel at your conversation skills. All the while, gather information to help you help them. Be curious and ask smart and gently probing questions that will help you do just that.”

We've all been on the receiving end of networking efforts gone wrong. It is jarring to have someone collect business cards as if on a scavenger hunt to earn a prize. It is uncomfortable when someone is listening to you with one ear and watching the room around you to see where she can next pounce for a potential lead.

As Gustin often says, “Good word-of-mouth marketing spreads fast, and bad word-of-mouth spreads even faster.” How you engage with others at networking events reflects upon your personal brand and reputation, and it can factor into the stories the



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media prepares about you and your company.

Gustin emphasizes that networking is about building relationships. Never forget that, and remember that building takes time. Bulldozing takes moments and leaves a swath of destruction in its path.

“The next time you head out to network with others — including reporters and editors — be sure to have the goal in mind that you are there to build relationships that will blossom over time. Leave the bulldozer at home,” she says.

Whether meeting people for the first time or talking with a reporter for a story, consider Gustin’s sage advice:

- Always focus on the other person.
- Be interested and helpful.
- Stay focused and present.
- Listen carefully.
- Be curious.
- Be able to describe what you do and why it matters in a concise, compelling and memorable way.

Meet both Gustin and me at the first meeting of the eWomenNetwork for Snohomish County on March 2 at the Everett Holiday Inn from 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. There will be plenty of opportunities to practice your networking skills. And, as the luncheon speaker, I’ll share quick, local examples that demonstrate how the power of publicity can generate winning leads for your growing business. I’ll also share at least five free resources or tools to help you learn how to catapult your story from obscurity to the media spotlight in record time.

Register by visiting this link: <https://events.ewomennetwork.com/event/calendar.php?lid=47>. See you there and then.

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SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Knowing whom to call is key to media relations

If you've got breaking news to share or a compelling story to pitch, knowing whom to call is as important as the story you want to tell.

If you are a small-business owner with other equally pressing deals to close and operational issues to address, chances are compiling a targeted media list isn't high on your priority list. The good news is that affordable resources are close at hand to make media list-building easy and time efficient for even the most time-starved business owner.

Before you invest in media-list resources, however, remember that knowing your own "top 10" list of media outlets that represent the best potential media placements for telling your story to the right audiences is always a great place to start.

When you are familiar with the reporters who write about your business, industry or expertise, you can demonstrate familiarity with their work as you make your pitch. That is always a winning way to start a conversation, capture attention and earn editorial consideration.

For example, a story ran in the Feb. 22, 2006, Wall Street Journal that addressed the challenge working couples face when returning home after a tough day at work. They find themselves in "the dead zone" and can't reconnect.

Alice Cunningham, co-owner of Olympic Hot Tub Co. (www.olympichottub.com), identified the Wall Street Journal as a priority media placement for her company and products for 2007. When she read this story, she immediately invited one of her best customers to respond to the Wall Street Journal reporter to suggest a Hot Spring spa as a good solution to help spouses get together.

The reporter liked the suggestion and wrote a follow-up column a week later that offered a variety of reader ideas to solve this common lament, including buying a hot tub. This example proves that following up with reporters about current stories with supplemental ideas can be an effective way to earn the media placements that matter most to you.

If you are too time-strapped to read every local newspaper or magazine and watch or listen to your targeted radio and television news programs, let the Puget Sound Media Directory make the process of identifying the right editors and reporters for your story easy and time efficient for you. My own copy from 2005 is well used



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and well worn, and the newly updated 2007-08 edition is now available for purchase. Visit www.pugetsoundmediadirectory.com to learn more.

If your company has news of interest to reporters and editors across the state of Washington, the Washington State Media Directory is a useful resource. Visit www.finderbinder.com to learn more.

If you need to take your message beyond Washington state, consider www.medialistsonline.com.

This service is built for publicists with only occasional needs for media contact lists. MediaLists Online allows you to generate basic media lists in a matter of minutes without having to invest substantially in software.

And, if you sell a product or service that is well targeted and well timed for national holiday gift guides or stories relevant to moms, dads and grads, take a look at www.giftlistmedia.com. Be sure to allow plenty of lead time to pitch your stories because some national publications make decisions about holiday stories as much as six months in advance.

Now that you know about some of the useful tools available to help you share your story with the right decision-makers, invest wisely in the ones that will best serve your story. Then, get into action to bring your business and expertise out of obscurity and into the media spotlight today.

When your ideal customers read about how your product or service is making a difference for others, taking advantage of a timely trend or making news or solving problems that matter to people here and beyond, you'll earn new Web site visits, inquiries from qualified potential buyers and new engagements.

With such wonderful benefits waiting, my only question to you is this: What are you waiting for?

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SNOHOMISH COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Turn online biography into biz-building bonanza

If you own a professional services firm, a Web biography may be the single most powerful new business development tool you display in cyberspace — provided Web visitors can find it and are compelled to read it.

Unfortunately, many firms reduce their bio writing to the level of boilerplate bland, missing a great opportunity to tell their stories in a compelling way that actually builds business among quality prospects.

Unlike large, well-established corporations with decades of heritage and layers of bureaucracy to guide their approach to storytelling, you don't have to hide your personality behind the corporate brand. You are your firm. Clients are buying you and your expertise. By all means, give them something to hold onto. Most importantly, share measurable results that you achieve for clients.

Clients want to make more money, sell more products and services, save money, engage quality clients and possibly earn reputations as sought-after keynote speakers who command top dollar for their commentary. Use your bio to show how you make these results reality for your clients, and quality prospects will be motivated to beat a path to your door.

Yes, please impress with prestigious college degrees, decades of business advisory experience and important brand-name companies on your client list. Then, share your track record of great results in a manner that makes prospects want to reach out and take your hand to journey forward together. Clients want to work with people they trust, respect and like. Never forget that.

Here is a stellar example:

“Lori Prokop, senior group publisher with Best Seller Publishing, is a 17-year profit-producing expert in the information and publishing empire field. She selects authors, speakers and experts who have a book, training system or business model. Lori takes those chosen people by the hand and shows them how to create entire information and publishing empires ... resulting in best-selling and celebrity status ... and they own it. Lori has created, written, published and distributed best-selling books and audio programs for clients such as legendary business guru Ted Turner, master motivational speaker Mark Victor Hansen, Network Marketing Legend Dayle Maloney and the business training program ‘Planning to Succeed’ for the U.S. Small Business Administration.



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Unlike others who simply create ideas, Lori has a proven track record of taking action to produce massive results.”

Tell stories about your proudest career or life accomplishments. Demonstrate how your counsel helped clients exceed their wildest performance expectations. Share a quote that inspires you to do your best work. Reveal something about the passion you bring to each client relationship so people will want to meet you to continue the conversation.

And, don't forget to share testimonials from clients who have benefited as a result of your wisdom, training, experience and overall approach. When a client says that he makes more money after each conversation with you, don't be afraid to put that in writing and post it to your Web site. Then, you will be in a better position to win new business.

Most importantly, display the bio and testimonials in prominent places on the Web site so prospects won't have to search for the information. The New Client Marketing Institute (www.newclientmarketing.com) reports that the bio page is the least-visited page on Web sites today. And it is no wonder, considering how boring most of them are.

Display a very short bio of 50 to 100 words in the bio section that says something very interesting that will make the professional memorable. Then, put a longer version in the press room section of your Web site.

For example, Henry DeVries, a marketing coach and writer specializing in lead generation for professional services firms and technology service companies (www.henrydevries.com) reveals on his Web site that he once lost \$13,000 in the last question of the TV game show “Jeopardy.” This fun fact helps readers remember him. Then, his press room bio goes into greater detail about his best-selling books on client seduction and self-marketing secrets, his proven ability to generate millions of dollars in new business, and other important and inspiring details that demonstrate his ongoing pattern of delivering superior results for clients.

Being memorable is especially important in “me too” industries like financial services and banking, where the people make it possible to differentiate between companies with a similar mix of products and services. By all means, don't be afraid to make yourself stand out. If you tell your story in an authentic, winning way, you may attract just the right blend of clients to perpetuate your firm's success.

Your Web site can be among the most powerful tools to bring quality prospects to the door of your professional services firm. Make the most of cyberspace by sharing your biographical information in a manner that is beyond boilerplate and fabulous on every score. This single act could be among the smartest new business moves you make this year.

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Published June 2007

Why connecting 1-to-1, 1-to-many can pay off

The businesses that earn winning headlines and broadcast air are those that offer the right hook or angle to invite interest and serve those who pay attention to the news. A big part of that is making a connection and telling a story that resonates with the editors and reporters who serve as the gatekeepers to much broader audiences.

Approach your story by making clear why it is timely, newsworthy, relevant, trendworthy and local. When the reason the readers and viewers should care is center stage, you are in an even better position to earn the coverage you seek. A good story is one that touches your heart, kicks you in the stomach, makes you think, hits you over the head or squarely between the eyes, or kicks you in the behind and into action in some way. To bring these ideas to life, consider how a few local companies earned publicity by sharing compelling and timely story hooks.



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- Darwin's Natural Pet Products (www.darwinpet.com) is a Seattle-based manufacturer that offers convenient home delivery of its pet foods made from free-range meats and organic vegetables. When the national pet food recall became big news in April, Darwin's had a story to tell. This company jumped on the timely nature of the news to offer resources and information to help pet lovers make safe and nutritious choices during a troubling time. In doing so, it earned front-page and feature articles in Seattle news publications, a radio interview and a news broadcast feature. For Darwin's, the opportunity couldn't have been better to share its "adding life to pet's years and years to pet's lives" message. Best of all, new customer counts grew fourfold in the weeks following the national pet food recall, and the trend continues.
- Affirmagy (www.affirmagy.com) is a Seattle-based company that makes personal affirmation blankets that celebrate big ideas such as abundance, courage, strength and love. Given the popularity of "The Secret" and the media messages resonating nationally about the power of intentional living, Affirmagy's goal to change the world one Affirmawrap at a time is a big idea at the right time. This company has aligned itself with major nonprofit organizations such as the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life events to make it easy for everyone to give to this cause as they purchase the company's products. From a media relations standpoint, this company has a story to tell. When a regional business publication wrote about how start-up businesses are embracing cause-related marketing as a means of building brand ambassadors and inviting contributions to worthy causes, Affirmagy was at the center of that story.
- Olympic Hot Tub Co.'s (www.olympichottub.com) co-owner Alice Cunningham has grown her company over the past 30 years by making it easy for customers to take it easy. She also has adopted a customer service philosophy of making it easy for consumers to buy, own and refer her products. Many business publications seek out useful "how to" features from local experts to guide their readers to achieve more success. Cunningham's customer service philosophy has served as the foundation for article placements in several local newspapers and Internet article directories. As a result, she has earned local speaking engagements to inspire others to follow her lead. Her one-to-one messages about doing business and

serving others have carried forward to much wider audiences, reinforcing her reputation as a successful business veteran who offers credible advice.

Take a moment to consider how you share your story one-to-one at the local networking event or one-to-many through your own speaking and media relations efforts. Do you offer a statement of fact about what you sell or the service you provide? Or, do you offer a statement that actually invites more conversation by hitting a nerve, scratching an itch or relieving universal pain?

Here are a few examples that get to the heart of the matter with impact:

- I help you find the courage to take chances and make changes in your business and your life. — Amanda Murphy
- I am a retirement guru. I guide you to an abundant retirement with control, confidence and ease. — Steve Juetten
- I am a real estate developer and investor who makes the cosmopolitan lifestyle affordable for Seattle's first-time homebuyer. I am also a mentor and coach with intentions to inspire a billion people to live bold lives of contribution. — Thach Nguyen

What these powerful statements share in common is that they go beyond the self-centered notions of providing food, clothing and shelter for each business owner. Not one of them asks you to buy a widget or engage a service. In fact, they are bold, selfless declarations that intend greater good. Immediately you want to know more and find out how you can engage and benefit.

Consider this as you ponder how to tell your own story to whoever will listen as an elevator speech, a speaking topic or a story for the media. Be prepared to tell your story one-to-one or one-to-many in a way that invites conversations and new relationships to propel your business forward.

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Award wins can help build biz brand, sales

Companies seeking credibility, a leading edge over competition, favorable publicity and a way to accelerate sales are gaining value from award contests that reinforce their core values, strategic initiatives and marketing claims.

Just as travelers rely upon the star rating system to choose a hotel or a Zagat survey to choose a restaurant, buyers of any variety of products and services want to spend their money with winners — and they do. In fact, a research study by Hendricks & Singhal of the University of Western Ontario and Georgia Institute of Technology revealed that more than 600 quality corporate award winners had 37 percent more sales growth and 44 percent higher stock price return than their peers.

Whether it be an industry-exclusive competition, a media-sponsored recognition opportunity or personal recognition for your impact and influence on your organization and the local or national business landscape, these opportunities pay off. When leveraged optimally, award wins will build your credibility and reputation in the marketplace, attract winning team members, foster a sense of pride and accomplishment throughout your organization, and compel potential clients to take notice.

Here are a few more benefits to justify your investment of time and effort in award competitions:

- Get to “yes” faster. Winning prestigious award contests can help unknown, unproven or emerging companies better compete for and win new business. Award wins make choosing a company less risky for buyers and potential employees.
- Demonstrate ethics through credible endorsements. If a prospect is evenly divided between quality companies, the company with the most stellar ethics as demonstrated by a Better Business Bureau award may have an advantage. As reports of corporate ethics violations become more commonplace, consumers are seeking out companies with track records of integrity. An award recognizing a business’ demonstrated ability to navigate the market without compromising integrity can help separate it from competitors.
- Support marketing claims. Winning gives advertising copywriters more to talk about so cash registers can ring. When JD Powers & Associates grants awards for customer satisfaction, consumers listen. T-Mobile has a pattern of winning these prestigious awards. Is it any wonder that their billboard offers three words that say it all: “Bling, bling, (and) bling”?
- Pack a powerful punch through publicity. Favorable local, trade or national publicity and word-of-mouth referrals often result from contest wins, filling the lead-generation pipeline.
- Tip new business to your favor. Just like Avis — the rental car company with a reputation for trying harder to beat Hertz out of the No. 1 position — award winners may be perceived as working with greater diligence to demonstrate their value.
- Compel judges to become your customers. Judges often visit award candidates’ businesses because they like what they read in award applications and want to experience the companies’ services and products



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for him/herself.

If you are convinced that award wins can pay off for your business and your brand, follow these tips when putting pen to paper:

- Prioritize. Choose legitimate and prestigious contests that reinforce your company's core values, strategic initiatives and marketing claims. If the contests are well supported by the local media, all the better.
- Do the application justice. Assign the task of creating award-worthy entries to someone who has the passion, experience, storytelling ability and time to do the job right. Last-minute efforts rarely deliver a winning result.
- Prove your points. Call out winning ways in easy-to-read bullets. Share anecdotes, customer and employee testimonials, and press coverage to prove why your company is award worthy. Steer clear of hyperbole and "blah, blah, blah" commentary that will take up space and bore the judges.
- Meet and address all the award criteria. Only then will you have a fighting chance to earn a place in the winner's circle. And be sure to submit entries on deadline.
- Presentation counts. When given the choice to make a hard-copy presentation or send a fax, go with the hard copy every time. A fuzzy fax won't catapult your story to the top of the stack when compared with other applications with better overall presentation quality.
- Go in to win. If you can't weigh in with a stellar effort, sit out the competition and save your time and money until you can.

When you receive favorable recognition from entering or winning awards competitions, recognize the importance of merchandising the coverage to your brand- and business-building advantage. Here are a few ideas.

- Use your newspaper clip to grow your credibility and influence in the marketplace by sharing it with your clients, prospects, referral partners and friends with a call to action to engage your services.
- Include the online article link in your electronic newsletter to get the word out to an audience that already engages with your company and its news. Ask recipients to spread the news and invite their quality referrals.
- Frame the article and hang it in your lobby, retail window, building lobby or executive conference room.
- Enclose a copy of the story with your next direct-mail campaign.
- Post the coverage on your Web site. Put it into your online media room and/or on your home page, depending on the importance of the coverage.
- Bring article reprints to serve as handouts when you speak. Be sure you have the permission from the publication to duplicate the article.

Award wins in the media can pack a powerful punch for building your company's brand and reputation. Follow these tips, and you'll be in good position to profit optimally from the media awareness that results from your winning ways.

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Published August 2007

**Don't ignore your hometown
news publications**

Every day, clients and colleagues tell me that they want to earn Oprah's attention or have their stories told on National Public Radio or Good Morning America. I applaud these intentions and suggest that they consider their hometown media before they reach for the stars and the sky. Why? Because earning "ink and air" in the media in your own back yard is the first step toward earning the credibility to secure the national media placements.

Putting all of one's eggs in the national media placement basket is a risky strategy at best. The editors and producers at these national media outlets sift through thousands of story pitches every day in search of just the right stories to bring to their audiences. The chances of your story rising to the top of the stack without the credibility of prior hometown media coverage are slim.

Your good intentions to serve the readers and viewers, combined with all the best story pitching and follow-up in the world won't be the least bit rewarding unless you can ultimately earn the ink and the air. And that takes time, tenacity, great storytelling and patience. Some clients have earned Oprah's attention in a heartbeat, and others have toiled for five years or more to wait for their moment in the spotlight. All the while, these businesses still need to turn a profit and make magic happen in the marketplace in order to keep the doors open for business.

My best advice is to start at home while you also swing at the national media fences. Brainstorm your own "top 10" list of premier media placements in your own back yard, and begin the process of appealing to those editors and writers whose job it is to inform, inspire and serve the media consumers where you live and work.

Sometimes, for whatever reason, the major daily newspapers will pass on a particular story, despite the strength of your pitch or the remarkable story you have to tell. That is when you have to dig deeper and consider your options.

For example, while working with a local Vietnamese millionaire recently to promote a big event in Seattle, I came up empty with both the Seattle Times and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Undaunted, I approached the Northwest Asian Weekly about doing a story about this local entrepreneur with intentions to inspire a billion people around the world to live bold lives of contribution. And, I approached the Beacon Hill



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News and the Madison Park Times with similar story ideas because my client got his start in residential real estate working the Beacon Hill neighborhood, and he lives in the coverage area served by the Madison Park Times.

Guess what happened? We earned front-page coverage with bold, color photos in all three local newspapers, just in time to earn the interest and attendance of 1,000 event guests at my client's big event at the Seattle Westin. And, those prominent stories were persuasive and compelling in my efforts to earn three radio interviews that targeted just the right audience of potential guests to benefit from this client's message before the event took place.

Now, my client has some powerful print and broadcast support posted to the pressroom on his event Web site to lend credibility to future events. This makes it easy for future event guests and reporters to visit the site to learn more about what he offers. And when the national media come to call, he already has earned both the credibility and support of his hometown media, making it that much easier to tell his story to a national audience.

Perhaps most importantly, local media opportunities offer you the opportunity to practice sharing your message and refining your interview skills before the national cameras and reporters come to call. Those bright camera lights can be daunting to the uninitiated, and you sure don't want to make any message or performance mistakes when the national press is at your door.

Yes, please reach for the stars and the sky by intending to earn coverage in O Magazine and on National Public Radio and Good Morning America. And remember that telling your story to your hometown newspaper can be very powerful, too.

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Don't wait any longer to get your PR ball rolling

Editor's note: Due to other commitments, Nancy Juetten will no longer be contributing her Media-Savvy-to-Go column to the Snohomish County Business Journal. This is her final column for the journal.

After reading the Media-Savvy-to-Go columns over the last year, are you ready to get into action yet to earn favorable publicity for your growing business?

Think about the five most powerful lead-generation tactics that are delivering the goods for your business. Then, ask yourself how consistently you are applying them to enjoy the bounty that can flow from those efforts.

Is it any surprise that four of the five most powerful lead-generation tactics that continue to work for my growing business have media relations and networking activities at the center? These tactics include:

- Doing exceptional work for clients.
- Participating in local networking groups such as Women Business Owners, the chamber of commerce, the eWomenNetwork and the Women's Business Exchange and listening carefully for the needs that others share, being of service to help them ease their pain, whether or not the solution involves my services.
- Writing articles for the media and the Internet article directories to support the success of others with proven, useful and time-tested guidance and advice that reinforces my expertise and demonstrates my commitment to be of service. This drives traffic and qualified leads to the Web site and fuels winning new business conversations and transactions.
- Publishing a high-value and free e-zine that engages customers and prospects in my expertise and generously offers news and resources to support their success. This also drives traffic to my Web site and invites new opportunities to offer products and services to people who need them.
- Speaking to professional groups regularly to offer tips, resources, information and ideas to support their success.



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I believe that PR is the most influential, high-value and affordable initiative you can apply to build the buzz for your growing business. As you get into action, you can enjoy great rewards, including the thrill of getting seen, heard and celebrated in your own back yard; new client engagements; new media opportunities to tell your story; new speaking engagements to inspire others with your insights and commentary; and so much more.

As you proceed with your own publicity-seeking efforts, keep these tips in mind:

- Craft a winning story that is timely, newsworthy and relevant, always making clear why others should care.
- Find new ways to tell your story over time to keep your company and its products, services and perspectives in the news.

- Learn and apply new tactics — such as blogging, social networking and e-zines — to reach new audiences who can potentially become your customers and fans.

Staples would have us believe that there is an “easy button” to press to build brand and reputation. The truth is that it takes a number of steps applied in a winning way over time to earn and enjoy the business success we seek.

This column has provided a great soapbox from which to share tips, resources and ideas. My intention has been to educate, inform and inspire you to believe in the power of free publicity to build your business and propel you forward toward the life and business you’ve imagined. Based on many of your calls and e-mails, mission accomplished. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your success in this way.

Make today the day you finally get into action to realize the bounty of success that is possible for you as you spread the word about your business in your own back yard and beyond through the impact and credibility of free publicity. Great rewards are waiting.

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