



have a peek at...

Do-It-Yourself Public Relations for SME's

**Written by**

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Public Relations or PR is completely different to advertising but each has its place in the marketing strategy. The key difference is the way in which the audience perceives the information presented to them. For example, when you see a press or TV advertisement you know the ad has been paid for and that the company is trying to sell to you. However, when you read articles written by a third party you're seeing something that hasn't been paid for and subsequently view it as either an endorsement or are interested in the opinion it expresses.

### **What's your great story?**

Newsworthiness can be a particularly tricky issue for many businesses, after all what might seem like the biggest piece of news your company has to offer, may pale in comparison to what will actually get featured in the press but Peek can help.

As a rule of thumb most editors will look to see if a story covers any number of these seven points:

Timeliness:

Time is of the essence, no one wants to hear about old news.

Prominence:

Does it feature a well-known company or person?

Proximity:

Is your story relevant locally or nationally?

Human interest:

Does your story involve or have an impact on people, especially in regard to charities or other good causes.

Impact:

Does your story have any consequences or significance to the publications readers?



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Conflict:

Ethical or physical clashes are always evident in the news, whether it be war or a hostile merger.

Uniqueness:

Does your story feature something never seen or heard of before?

Talk to your colleagues and customers about what you think is the story as they will help you find new angles that are interesting to them which may spark a thread for you. Look for milestones in your business and product benefits, not functions.

**How can you make your story stronger?**

Ok, so you've got a story idea brewing, now let's make it stronger.

There are three great things you can use to make your story stronger:

Quotes:

From key people in your business, customers, or even better industry spokespeople

Facts:

Support your story's main points with well researched and annotated facts.

Figures:

How big, how much, how long - key figures can make great headiness.

A note here to say that if you are quoting someone, get their permission. If you are using facts and figures, make sure they are from reputable sources as journalists will check.



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### **Before you write it....**

Think about who is your ultimate audience that you are trying to reach. This will help you decide which media outlets to target and create your media list. This list can include print, TV, radio and online opportunities for coverage of your story. You may find regional outlets, trade magazines, lifestyle glossies and specialist sections in the nationals.

Read and research your target media to see what angles the stories they have featured are taking. This will give you an insight into which part of your story the journalist may find most interesting. Try and get the named email address of the journalist responsible for the subject area that your story is relevant to, rather than just the news desk.

### **How to write your story so it gets read**

Journalists are busy people and receive a constant stream of press releases so how do you get yours noticed?

Two easy things to remember:

1. Have a great headline
2. Put the best bits first!

What we mean is use the juiciest bit of your story as the headline, as this is often the subject line in the email that the journalist will receive and is the first hurdle you have to leap. Make your headline stand out and write it as a sentence, not a tabloid headline.

The first paragraph should then start with the best bit of your story, followed by the next best bit and be only two or three sentences at most.

Don't bury all the good stuff in the body copy as the recipient may not read that far! With the rest of the story make sure you cover the 5 W's: Who, What, Where, When and Why.



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### **Proof read your story**

Proof read it again and then ask a colleague to proof read it for you.

### **Who are you?**

Don't forget to put your contact details at the bottom of the release and your mobile number as some journalists don't work 9 to 5 and may need to reach you out of hours. If you have photographs available don't attach them to your email, instead make a note on the bottom of what you have, should they need them.

### **Selling your story**

So we have the story, a great headline, gripping first paragraph and a quote, facts and figures to support it. You know who you've written it for, and who you'd like to send it to. Before you do though, we'd recommend the following three steps for success:

1. Call the journalist. Not at 4.30pm in the afternoon when they are likely to be on deadline, but early mornings are best.
2. Fax or email them the details once you've spoken to them.
3. Call them to see if they need anything else. Do not try and sell the story to them again.

Simples.



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### **Online PR**

You can distribute your story quickly online through a number of free websites including:

[www.prbuzz.com](http://www.prbuzz.com)

[www.prleap.com](http://www.prleap.com)

[www.prlog.org](http://www.prlog.org)

These will give you instant coverage and a valuable link back to your website which can boost your search engine rankings and increase traffic to your website.

### **And finally...**

Every organisation has a message to deliver and an audience to reach and time after time public relations has proven to be an effective way to do this. Image and reputation remains paramount to any business and for this reason PR should be an essential part of any company's marketing plan. As you sit and read about the success of another 'specialist' entering the marketplace or your competitor commenting on the latest industry news, do you question why it's not you making the news?

For further hints and tips on how to market your business for free visit our blog at [www.peekcreative.co.uk](http://www.peekcreative.co.uk).