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Is Bad Publicity Really Good Public Relations?

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It's often been said that there is no such thing as bad publicity and in fact the only thing worse than being talked about...is not being talked about. For Joe Perri & Associates, bad publicity represents reputational and brand damage to the business, its owners and the company's long term financial interests.

The restaurant meal that resulted in a bad case of food poisoning was a bad meal and no amount of spin can alter that fact. To add to the woes of the business, the news will spread rapidly like outward flowing ripples caused when a large stone is dropped into a small pond.

A well planned and executed Public Relations (PR) strategy can deliver many benefits for a business.

So what is PR and what are the benefits?

PR is an effective and cost efficient means of reaching a large audience by the creation and distribution of information – primarily in the form of stories that are published in newspapers and magazines and reported on TV and radio. It also includes social media, email newsletters, information brochures, community relations, speeches, government relations and many other forms of communication.

PR has the power to literally reach millions of people for very little money when compared to advertising as the media doesn't charge for publishing stories they consider to be of interest to their readers or audience.

It enhances the internal and external understanding of the company, its strategies, objectives and achievements by building a positive public image and reputation.

Furthermore, PR stimulates demand for a company's products or services through a stronger brand and business profile; the organisation is perceived as being active, progressive and on the move; and a competitive point of difference in the marketplace is established.

Here are some guidelines for good PR and better storytelling –

- **It must be a good story.** If the story is irrelevant, underwhelming or overly commercial the media will ignore it. Good PR focuses on high-quality content that's designed to build a brand over the long term, not generate a 'quick hit'.
- **It must reflect real expertise.** Most companies have legitimate, deep and relevant expertise to offer – the challenge is communicating that expertise. Effective PR articulates the expertise of the company, its marketplace

advantage and builds credibility and credibility builds business brand and reputation.

- **Corporate values are terrific...but.** Mission and values statements are great for internal consumption, but for consumers and clients it's the real-life examples that will have the greatest influence i.e. show them...don't just tell them!
- **Quality over padding.** Well written content devoid of empty words, corporate speak, jargon and padding is critical for good storytelling. This also includes frequency of distribution and the need to avoid becoming a 'media pest'.
- **A call to action.** The objective is to produce compelling content that motivates the reader to retain the business relationship, inspire clients to refer the company to friends and associates or generates enquiries from potential customers.

Every business has a story to tell that will be of interest to the media, clients, potential customers, alliance partners, suppliers and industry in general. By strategically harnessing and implementing a PR focussed communication process the benefits will be profound and long term and will include credibility, enhanced reputation and new business opportunities.

Good PR begets good PR.