



JOE PERRI & ASSOCIATES
infinite possibilities

Why your business needs PR & getting it right

By Joe Perri

Joe Perri & Associates Pty Ltd

November 2016. When a business owner develops his / her business plan, they often include advertising and overlook public relations (PR) thinking that it's a high-priced process and not for them. The reality is quite the opposite as it is one of the most cost effective methods for an SME to raise awareness irrespective of size, in start-up mode or as an established enterprise that wants to attract more customers, retain existing clients, encourage investors, etc.

Unfortunately, many business owners don't understand and appreciate the basic principles of PR and tend to lump the process into a vague collection that includes advertising, marketing, promotion and sponsorship.

At its core, the purpose of PR is the articulation of how the relationship with the business can be of benefit to a specific target group or audience that are important to the business i.e. clients, suppliers, alliance partners, investors, potential investors, staff and the list goes on.

More importantly, PR is a process of building and enhancing valuable business relationships – but it is not a standalone exercise as all marketing and communication related activities have a role to play and must dovetail and complement each other with a single focus.

The more a business communicates effectively with its target audience(s), the more opportunities there are for building trust and establishing a positive reputation.

For businesses with limited resources and funds, PR can add substantially to their bottom line as it is usually much less expensive than advertising. A good story in a leading newspaper or industry publication can lead to an increase in enquiries, sales and general interest in the business.

When a story is published – businesses should maximise the promotional opportunity and send the clipping or link to clients, staff, suppliers and potential customers. If it's a particularly good story – have it enlarged and displayed in the company reception area or boardroom as well the website home/landing page.

At the core of a PR program is the press release and it is important that the content and message is structured correctly. Following are some fundamental tips and suggestions –

- PR and marketing requires two very different styles of writing and it is very easy to fall into the trap of writing the release as a marketing piece that is trying to sell something.



JOE PERRI & ASSOCIATES

infinite possibilities

- In order to attract the attention of the media it must be newsworthy
- The communiqué needs to include the 5 **Ws**
 - What** – what is happening?
 - When** – when it is happening?
 - Where** – where in time or place is it happening?
 - Why** – why is it happening (or happened) and why should I care?
 - Who** – who is involved in what is happening / who is it happening to?
- Quotes should be restricted to the company spokesperson – usually the owner, CEO or senior executive – and are meant to highlight why the business believes in this product or service; and how it is going to be of benefit to the company and/or its customers.
- In some circumstances, it may add more impact to incorporate a quote from a client, supplier or alliance partner. Keep these quotes brief, to the point and interesting – avoid superlatives.

Quotes need to be useful and relevant to the message and content of the communiqué if they are to attract the attention of journalists.

- Employ some basic search engine optimisation techniques and make sure that key words appear in the headline, summary and lead sentence.
- Finally, the all-important contact details at the end of the release – name of the person to contact, business name, telephone, email address and company website address.

While it's possible to fall into the trap of thinking PR is easy when a quick result is achieved – it's important to understand that the PR process is a marathon not a sprint.

Everyday consumers are bombarded with literally hundreds of messages, emails, advertisements, etc. so in order to be effective and stand out from competitors, businesses need to keep repeating the message over and over again. So, it's far better to spend the PR budget wisely and miserly allowing for the impact and results to build over time.

It's not uncommon for eager business owners to judge quickly and trust slowly if results measured in published stories aren't achieved immediately. It's best to be like the tortoise and not the hare by sticking to the strategy and the process in order to achieve the all-important long term goals.

Issued by Joe Perri & Associates Pty Ltd

www.joeperry.com.au