

## **Get the Most Out of Your Publicist**

If you just hired a publicist to handle your media-relations efforts, you may be a little nervous about the expense and getting the press exposure you desire. However, you made the right move.

Now that you have a professional handling your PR, you can focus on core business activities. And to make the best of your new relationship, here are a few pointers:

### **1. Set expectations.**

When you start working with a new publicist, discuss what you both expect out of the relationship. Set firm goals and review the activities necessary to reach your objectives.

By "being on the same page" from the beginning, you will have less conflict and accomplish things faster.

### **2. Don't micro-manage.**

You are paying for an expert to handle your publicity efforts, so let that person do his or her job. Schedule regular meetings to discuss current priorities, activities and future strategies, and keep communications open.

But try not to hassle your publicist. Remember, he or she is dealing with media members who need to be contacted at just the right time with just the right story angle.

### **3. Provide information quickly.**

A publicist should act as a member of your team and know all of the benefits your business has to offer. However, many times it is necessary to collect client testimonials, current company statistics, recent photos, and more...fast.

When your publicist asks for information, try to provide it as quickly as possible. It can mean the difference between getting a feature story and being passed up by the competition who acts quicker.

### **4. Be patient.**

Give your publicist some time. When starting with a new client, it can take several weeks to develop a pertinent PR Plan, conduct the appropriate research, prepare targeted story-angles, and contact reporters, editors and producers.

Then, it can take months before a media member actually requests an interview and publishes a story. However, if you don't see some results within a reasonable amount of time, discuss your expectations with your publicist and review your goals. It is important to work together to see results and make necessary changes.

## **5. Get reports.**

On a regular basis, your publicist should keep you aware of what is going on with your current publicity activities and discuss future plans.

Although you need to let your publicist do his or her job, you will want to stay abreast of how your publicity efforts are going and how you can work together more efficiently to meet goals.

## **6. Be reasonable and smart.**

If you are not happy with your publicity efforts because you have not received a feature story on "Oprah," "Forbes," "Time Magazine," "The Wall Street Journal," "The New York Times," and others, take a moment to review your business and publicity efforts.

Perhaps your message simply does not fit into the format of these media venues, and they are looking for organizations with higher revenues, more customers and employees or a completely different story angle.

If this is the case, your publicist will not be able to get you coverage in these media venues until the appropriate changes take place within your business.

However, if you've paid a lot of money for very few placements and communicated your issues with your publicist with little results, it may be time to end the relationship and look for help elsewhere.

## **A Final Note for Success**

It can be nerve-racking to spend the time and money on a publicist. Just like all other professions, there are good publicists who produce results and bad publicists who waste your time and money.

However, if you conduct the appropriate research to find the right person, regularly communicate activities and goals with your publicist and let this expert do his or her job, you will garner media attention to help grow your business quickly and cost-effectively.