

From: Julianne Smith's Garter Girl Blog

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How to gain more attention for your business...post on sage wedding pros

2010 February 10

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Ten Tips Earn More Attention For Your Company

By: Julianne Smith

PR. To some, it is an ugly acronym. Public relations gets a bad rap, as people think of images of slicksters, working for the highest bidder. In reality, PR comes down to telling your story your way. In this day and age, PR is literally every outward expression of your company. It is more than just getting the latest wedding magazine to feature your work. It is your website, your logo, what you Tweet about, your partnerships, what you wear to an industry cocktail party. Everything.

With the power of social media, getting attention for your company is easier than ever. You have more control over the outcome than ever before. But, you have to know what you are doing. You must be purposeful with your actions.

Many, if not all, of the old rules of PR still apply today. After nearly ten years in politics and PR, I turned my energy towards my stylish wedding garter company. I've learned a few things along the way, so here are a few tips from me to you. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but rather ten quick things to be mindful of as you work to earn more attention for your company. And yes, I said "earn" because you have to work for it!

1. Be You: Are you boring and stuffy? Well, then don't send a boring and stuffy pitch. Be you. If it is an email, then it should read exactly as if you were speaking. If you are talking on the phone or in person, then relax and just be you. This is important because it ensures that you are being authentic.

2. Keep it Short: People have the attention span of flies and they have even less time to read emails, so keep your pitches, voicemails and/or whatever else short and to the point. If you are a designer, say a little bit about your product to give it context, but then let the designs speak for themselves. If editors like what they see, don't worry, they will seek you out to find out more.

3. Do Your Homework: The phrase "cold calling" means reaching out to someone that you haven't met before. It doesn't mean reaching out to someone who you've never heard of before. Do your homework before you pitch your company to anyone. If it is a magazine, look through the past few issues and get a sense of their style. As you are reading, think about where your product would fit in, so that you can suggest it as a potential way to work together.

4. Target: Only pitch to the those that would be a good fit for your news. For example, it would be a huge waste of time (yours and theirs) to submit a futuristic themed wedding to a vintage inspired blog. Just by the theme of it, you know they aren't going to write about it, so don't even bother. Make an effort to seek out those that would have an actual interest in what you have to say. You will be more likely to see results.

5. Make a Plan: If you have something coming up that is worthy of publication, then make a plan BEFORE the actual event. Once the event happens, you should be well into working your plan, not just starting it. Think about the publications that would be a good fit, line up the vendors who contributed and make a "pitch list." Start gathering contact information and reaching out to your list. There is nothing wrong with teasing your news or sharing a few preview pictures with a reporter to get a sense of their

interest. 6. Pick Up the Phone: No one uses the phone anymore. Everyone relies on texts and email. You will be more effective if you actually make a pitch over the phone. (You get bonus points if you can do it in person!) If an outlet has publicized directions for how to contact them, then, of course, you should follow it. But, there is no reason that you can't follow that up with a phone call.

7. You Are Your Best Advocate: Publicists, ghost writers and others that you can hire to help you promote your company have their purpose and place. Whether you hire someone or not, know that you, and only you, are the best advocate for your company. Work with the person that you hire to get the results you want, don't just expect them to do it for you. If you have employees, be very clear with them about who can and cannot talk to press and use social media to discuss your company. You are the one who knows the ins and outs of your company, and you will be able to give it the best public face.

8. Social Media is PR: Like it or not, when you use social media (Twitter, Facebook and blogs) you are actively engaging in your own PR. Just by its nature, when you are on social media you are, in a very public way, promoting your company. What you say online impacts (positively or negatively) your company, so use it wisely.

9. Acknowledgement: If you use social media (and I think you should!), then it is important that you are actively engaging in the conversation. If you set up a Facebook page, then update it regularly. When a potential client visits your Facebook page and you haven't updated in three months, what does this say about your company? This also means acknowledging Tweets, emails, comments and other messages that come your way. It is bad PR and bad customer service to ignore anyone. And, yes, an RT on Twitter counts...especially to the younger generation. If you blog, consider anyone who reads your blog as a client. They might not be buying your products directly, but they are reading your words. Customers look to social media as a conversation. They want to talk directly to vendors and designers. Not acknowledging someone who contacts you is the social equivalent of giving someone a blank stare when they come up to you in the coffee shop and say, "I like your shirt."

10. Consistency is King: As the business owner, you should be saying the same few sentences over and over and over again. And, when you are sick of saying them, say them again. Come up with a few buzz sentences and phrases about your company and use them ALL the time. Use them when you explain your product to a client and use them in a pitch to a magazine. Your website, your blog, your Facebook page, your Twitter should all have the same look and feel, and more importantly, the same consistent message. Yes, that means writing the same few things repeatedly.

I know I said ten, but here is a bonus tip, because this one is important....

11. Be Humble...Yes, bloggers and magazines need content to fill their pages, but arrogance will get you nowhere. Be thankful for every piece (big or small) of PR your company is given. Make sure that whoever wrote about you knows how thankful you are. And, by the way, with the search-ability of the Internet, there is no such thing as a small media hit.

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