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How to Build Buzz for Your Services Without Spending a Dime

By Melanie Rembrandt

It's 8:30 a.m., and I just got off the phone with a potential, new customer. She heard about my services and was ready to start on a big project right away. Woo hoo!

As a copywriter, I'm sure you can relate to the joy of getting new business, and this may sound like a dream come true. Yes, the economy is rough right now, but there is a lot of work out there for copywriters just like you and me.

In fact, the referrals keep coming in ... and I don't pay a dime on advertising.

So, what's my secret?

It's public relations ... and you can do it too!

That's right. By using public relations (PR) in key media venues, you can promote your services and expertise fast – without paying for advertising. But even better than the free advertising is the third-party credibility that comes along with it.

You see, media members are always looking for sources for their stories ... people who can provide their opinions and expertise about a particular topic, trend, or current news item.

And when your name appears in a newspaper, magazine, television newscast, or some other media venue, you get free publicity and a credibility boost.

For example, think how many potential customers you can reach with a quote in *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, an industry publication, or even your local paper or television-news broadcast – at no cost to you!

Plus, you can use these media mentions on your website and in your marketing materials to highlight your expertise and help sell your services to new clients.

That's what Steve Roderick, founder of [gotoBilling.com](#) did. And his business saw a 307% volume increase during this recession.

"Recently, we were quoted on a popular blog for small businesses, and our website traffic went up immediately, and it cost us nothing in advertising dollars."

And Rich Sloan, co-founder of [StartupNation.com](#) agrees. "Public relations can create awareness and drive demand for what you offer," states the popular site for entrepreneurs.

So, what is public relations, and how do you get these valuable media mentions to build buzz about your business?

Public relations is simply communicating a specific message to a targeted audience in a certain way – part of which you already know how to do as a skilled copywriter!

Best of all, learning how to do publicity is easy.

You don't need a fancy education or years of extensive experience in a PR firm. Just look at Kelly Kreth of Kreth Communications. "It isn't rocket science," she says. "I never took any classes or had formal training."

And Kelly is right. If you ask the appropriate questions and get people the information they need, you'll get some good publicity.

Want to try it? Well, to show you how simple it is, here are some questions to help you get started.

1. Who Are You Trying to Reach?

Okay. Pretend you're writing a direct-mail piece, and think about your target market. Who are you trying to reach and why?

Maybe you want to get your name in front of a specialized electronics-industry group to help them with their copywriting needs. Or, perhaps you want a specific, non-profit organization to notice your expertise so you can help them with their website copy.

Once you know whom you're going after and why, it's time to figure out how you can reach this audience via the media. To do this, answer these questions:

- What publications does my target market read?
- What programs do they watch on television?
- What shows do they listen to on the radio?
- What websites do they like to visit?
- What are people talking about on these media venues?

Take the time to track down the right media venues, and familiarize yourself with their content, style, and tone. After all, the more you know about each one, the more prepared you'll be when you make contact.

When you discover these answers, you'll have a great list of media venues to pursue. Then, you can move on to the next set of questions ...

2. What Do You Want to Say?

Think about the value you can provide each of the media venues on your list and ask yourself:

- Are you an expert in a particular industry?
- What kind of interesting insights can you offer pertinent to your copywriting niche?
- Can you comment on a current industry trend, offer comments on a hot news story or provide money- and time-saving tips?

Now, add all of the valuable tips, insights, and data you can offer each media venue to your list. Then, check to see if your comments will provide value. In other words, ask the big question ...

Is anyone going to care about what you have to say?

And even if you can't think of any interesting comments ... no worries. You can simply call a media member, introduce yourself, and offer your expertise as a resource for future stories!

Okay. You know what you're going to say, now ...

3. "Who Ya Gonna Call?"

You have a good media list going. Next, you just find the people you need to contact by reading, listening to, and watching your targeted media venues and ask:

- Which reporter, editor, or producer covers the "beat" or industry you want to pursue?
- What kinds of stories have these specific media members talked about in the past?
- Who will care about your expertise and what you have to say?
- How do you contact these media members?

Once you know whom you want to contact, add the information to your list. And voilà! You're ready to make your first call to a media member and start enjoying some free publicity!

That's it. I told you it was simple.

And here's another secret ...

Once you master this, you can start selling your new PR skills to your clients!

After all, there is a need for good PR people in today's tough times. According to The Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment in public relations firms should grow as firms hire contractors to provide public relations services rather than support full-time staff."

And look at Mary Reed of MR PR. "I operated my business for the first year on my bed and dining room table and started making money right away," she says. "I learned by doing and just jumped in the deep end and began doing it."

I started much the same way, and you can too!

Now, it may take some time, effort, and a little more training to hone your skills. That's why I created my new program with AWAI called *Secrets of Becoming a Publicist ...* to guide you through the process in a simple, fun way. Give it a try. Once you feel confident talking to the press, you can build buzz about your business and start making more money right away!

[Learn more about *Secrets of Becoming a Publicist* here ...](#)

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