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Media relations tactics that deliver big bang for effort with very few bucks

As 2006 fast comes to a close, it's time to determine your top three, high-return lead-generation methods and evaluate how consistently you apply them.

So often, we make single attempts at any variety of marketing or public relations tactics, only to abandon them before giving them the benefit of consistent application. Let 2007 be the year you apply focus, discipline and consistency to the top three, high-return lead-generation methods in your business-building toolbox so you can reap the greatest rewards.

To that end, here are 10 powerful media relations tactics for growing businesses serious about generating quality leads.

■ Write how-to articles for the media that have the greatest influence with your ideal customers. The value of editorial placements is said to have three times the value of advertising placements. How-to articles reach a wide audience of decision makers and decision influencers with one pass. They serve as credible, affordable brochures and often reside online indefinitely. They demonstrate your expertise in a way that inspires quality leads to get in touch with you to learn more. And, business journals are eager to receive your commentary and perspective to lend insight to their editorial plans, as long as you do so in a manner that delivers your expertise without directly selling your company.

■ Post your how-to articles in the online article directories, such as www.ideamarketers.com, www.articleteller.com and www.ezinearticles.com. E-newsletter publishers access these article directories for quality content, offering you the promise of potentially worldwide reach of your expertise and contact information.

■ Leverage your "how to" articles in the press with speeches and radio interviews. Media momentum can be a powerful thing. Early this year, I wrote an article for a marketing trade newspaper. A radio show producer invited me to be interviewed on his show after reading it. The radio interview helped promote one of my local talks, which, in turn, created interest in my services and generated several new engagements.

■ Serve as an expert to reporters that write about your industry. Newspaper editors want to hear from experts who have timely, newsworthy, relevant and trendworthy ideas to share. Offer yourself as a quality, credible resource to the right reporters and ask for the opportunity to share your points of view. Prepare a biography that makes clear the areas about which you can comment



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with impact, credibility and insight and your qualifications. Share it with the special section editors and beat reporters so they'll know to call you the next time they write about your business or industry.

■ Launch and sustain a quality e-newsletter to stay in touch with interested potential clients. The beauty of e-newsletters is that prospects ask to be added to your distribution list because they are interested in what you have to offer, though they may not be ready to buy right now. As long as you keep the ratio of information sharing at 80 percent and selling at 20 percent, chances are good that your company will be the first that readers will call when they are ready to buy. Your Web site visits, e-mails and phone inquiries will escalate in direct response to the effort.

■ Stage Webinars, teleseminars or small-scale free or low-cost seminars to make your expertise readily available to prospects. It is efficient to share your information in a one-to-many fashion. Group settings are comfortable for evaluators. One-to-one sessions are more like sales pitches, and that can be uncomfortable for those who are not ready to buy now.

■ Share meeting notices with the local papers. The exposure to their readerships brings your message to a wide audience of potential event guests. If you'd like a list of the best 27 media and online contacts to get this accomplished, visit my Web site to read more about Media-Savvy-to-Go Special Report No. 3.

■ Share valuable information by request. When folks read your materials, they engage more deeply with your expertise. That makes them want to engage you for a fee. Try it. It works really well. That is why so many businesses do it. And remember: This isn't sales information. It is useful information that leverages your expertise. That is an important distinction.

■ Write press releases about grand openings, staff additions/promotions and other happenings at your company, targeting the reporters who cover your industry. If you want to learn 89 reasons to write a press release, Joan Stewart offers a free online course to jump-start your learning. Register at www.publicityhound.com.

■ Enter award contests that are well supported by the media. Earning "best company to work for" recognition, a place on the list of most powerful U.S. women in banking or "company of the year" honors is a great way to earn media attention as well as new inquiries about both your services and employment opportunities while enhancing your reputation.

These activities require time but not much money, and they can deliver meaningful lead-generation results. My advice is to choose the top three tactics that appeal most to your skills, talents and passions, and get into action today. Your focused, disciplined and consistent media relations efforts can set the stage for the new year to be your best ever.

Nancy S. Juetten owns Nancy S. Juetten Marketing Inc. and is the author of the "Media-Savvy-to-Go" publicity tips booklets and workbook. Subscribe to her free "Media-Savvy-to-Go" e-zine by visiting www.mediasavvytogo.com. Contact her by calling 425-641-5214 or sending e-mail to nancy@mediasavvytogo.com.