

The Do's and Don'ts of Powerful Press Releases

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Want to get the media interested in your book, product or service? Then here are some expert tips that will help you get the media's attention through a well written press release!

Content:

Chances are that whether you are the owner, manager, or public relations director of a company you are always looking for ways to get your name into the public eye. While advertising is a great start, enhancing your advertising with publicity creates a perfect marriage of exposure for your company. What is publicity? It's non-paid communication to promote your company in a positive light using the media. Through publicity you build mutually beneficial relationships between your business and the public, with whom your success or failure depends. A great way to secure valuable publicity for your product is by becoming a guest on talk radio. It is an exceptional vehicle to get your message out to the masses with thousands of listeners tuning in to hear what you have to say! In the enthusiastic words of one of our clients, Dr. Cass Ingram, "Our sales have grown into millions per year from talk radio interviews alone! Regular,

consistent radio publicity really works!" Imagine that being your testimonial! Radio is a fantastic publicity medium, but if you are not media savvy it is difficult to know where to begin. The best place to start your publicity initiative is by writing one of the best marketing tools available: the press release. When it comes to press releases most people believe they just can write one, email it to a radio station and sit back and wait for the avalanche of phone calls. But as time passes and no producers are beating down their door, they make a few phone calls to the producers and hosts only to discover that no one even read the release in the first place. So, all of that time and work goes down the drain bringing you back to square one. By delivering a solid and compelling radio press release you can end this vicious cycle of disappointment.

Getting Started The most challenging part of writing anything is getting started. Looking at a blank page with a head full of ideas can be frustrating. Which one do I use? Which one will get the response that I need? To get started on your radio press release, think about who you will be pitching your show to. Ultimately your show is being pitched to radio hosts and producers who are inundated with press releases and phone calls every day. They are looking for the hottest show ideas that their listeners will enjoy. So, come up with a show idea. Easy? Well not necessarily easy, but it is your chance to flex those creative muscles. Think about how you can tie your product and message to something that a producer or host would deem newsworthy. Think outside the box a bit, some of the best radio show ideas live there! Now that you have your show idea there is something else to consider: why should they listen to me and not the countless other people who seemingly know more than me on the subject? Radio shows need expert, not guests sharing unqualified opinions. Remember, they can just as easily get these opinions by taking calls from their listeners. You are an expert and you don't even know it! Think about it: who knows your product and message better than you do? You can probably talk about your product with more knowledge and enthusiasm than anyone else out there. Later you'll learn the press release tricks to position yourself as an expert. Now you not only have a show idea, but you are an expert! Well done! Now it is time to start working on the release. Throughout this process do not forget the following vital piece of information: **THE PRESS RELEASE IS YOUR TOOL TO GET BOOKED ON RADIO SHOWS!**

The Five Pieces of the Press Release Puzzle The following are the important components of a radio press release which will make your show idea come to life for producers and hosts, as well as position you ahead of the pack.

1. **Headline!** Headline? **HEADLINE!!!** Arguably the most important aspect of your press release, headlines are so vital that there are entire books written and seminars taught on how to construct the most effective ones. Now, don't let this scare you. Writing a killer headline is definitely a skill that can be developed; all you need is a clear and concise overview of your topic. Write down your show idea and look it over. Now look it over again. What is your key message? Is your show idea newsworthy? Are there any well-known people that you can tie into your topic? Do you have any impressive statistics that are relevant? Is there anything controversial that ties directly into your subject? The answers to these questions will help you develop a headline which is ready for increased pick-up by producers and hosts. Your headline must communicate the topic of the show instantly in an eye-catching way. It should not be longer than 1 sentence and will act as **THE** sound bite on your topic. Now that's a lot of weight to put on a single sentence! Sometimes to alleviate the weight of the headline, you may need a sub-head to support it. If your headline gives just a taste of your show topic, then a sub-head is useful to explain it further. When someone reads the headline and sub-head together it should immediately click what the concept of the show is. Do this correctly and you will definitely grab some attention!
2. **Discussion Topic** This is your chance to present a concise summary of your show topic. It should continue naturally from the headline to further expand the topic. The headline gets the attention and the discussion topic gives the reader more. The length should be two sentences, tops. This forces you to present (and think about) your topic in a concise manner. Again try to tie your topic to current events, celebrity, or controversy! Don't be worried about repeating yourself in the different sections of the press release. After all, you want to get a cohesive point across! (A great tip: try writing the Topic Summary and Headline together. It is a great way to save time!)
3. **Talking Points/Questions** These are an absolute must for talk radio as they are the shaping tools that guide the host through your topic. Funnily enough, most times the host will read directly off of the press release during the interview. This not

only makes them look knowledgeable, but it saves them heaps of time! So why not have them read YOUR words?! Yet again you will need to tie in current events and any controversy that will stir interest (are you tired of hearing this yet?). Generally it is good to give no more than 10 of these conversation shapers. If you do get your show picked up, the interviews generally last anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes...so concise is a word that you should familiarize yourself with right now! Remember: the more interesting the questions - the more interesting the interview!

4. Topic Overview This is where the traditional press release that you may have seen before resurfaces. The reason it only appears now is because in radio you need to grab their attention quickly, something that the topic overview doesn't. Keep in mind that you are pitching your show topic to inundated radio producers and hosts whose time is very limited. With hundreds of releases hitting their inbox, the more eye-catching and relevant your headline is, the more they will read on. Once you have gained their attention with your eye-catching headline, topic summary and talking points it is time to present the full show idea. This is your opportunity to fully flesh out your topic to position you as an expert on the topic you are discussing. Do not write a sales piece here - write your show! Work your name, personal quotes and product name into the summary. Liberally use the following to build your topic and profile: statistics, testimonials, current news facts, professional title (which is real and honest). Use anything that will interest the producer, host and in effect THEIR AUDIENCE! Try to limit this to a page maximum, with an ideal range to be 4-6 paragraphs with around 4 sentences max in each one.

5. Biography Now this is the one element that people tend to forget, underplay or overplay. THIS IS ABOUT YOU! This is your chance to position yourself as the expert you are in order for your show idea to be picked up, with you in the driver's seat. Use your qualifications, education, career, relationships, memberships, travel history, how many dogs you have...etc. Basically use anything that can help qualify you as an expert on the topic. If you are writing about religion, anything that you do in your life that pertains to religion is applicable and increases your plausibility as an expert on that topic. A word of warning though: don't sensationalize yourself. By doing this you will immediately turn-off producers and hosts. Instead, effectively communicate your achievements and expertise on the topic that you are presenting. Simply rehashing your resume with bullet-points is an absolute "no-no". Don't Forget! The goal of a radio press release is to market you, the expert, and your topic to radio producers and hosts in order to get booked as a guest on their shows. All of the sections of the release should support each other and come together to present a clear view of your show topic. The best way to get someone to hit the delete button on your press release is by presenting them with a disjointed release that does not clearly present the topic or explain why you are an expert on the topic. Be concise at all times. If your release is "top-heavy" it will be dumped almost immediately, most times without even a glance. Make sure that the Headline and Topic Summary sections are top-notch, tight and straight to the point. With radio you have the freedom to be slightly more sensational than with print. By having an eye-catching headline and topic summary you will grab attention, and the rest of the release will feed it. Don't just go for eye-catching statements if they do not communicate your topic. Be clear and get your idea across as best as you can. And guess what? All of this hard work means nothing if your show topic is flat. Put lots of thought into your show idea. Think about topics that will appeal to the masses rather than a small niche market. The broader the appeal and the more timely the subject matter, the more interesting you are to radio producers and hosts. The radio press release is the best marketing tool to get you onto talk radio shows so you can publicize yourself and your product. If you take your time developing your topic and put lots of thought into developing your press release you can almost guarantee that radio stations nationwide will start biting! So get writing!

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