



## Four Crucial Steps to Generating Tradeshow PR

by Angela Kambarian, MA

Tradeshows are an excellent opportunity to increase your company and product's exposure, expand your visibility in the marketplace, meet face-to-face with industry leaders, impress potential customers, and attract reporters to gain media coverage. All of these are effective methods to grow your business.

Let's face it: most exhibitors could be doing a better job of generating Public Relations from their tradeshow participation. To take advantage of the tradeshow PR opportunity, you must design a compelling public relations strategy and find ways to differentiate yourself amid all the clutter.

Why PR? Simple.

When done properly, PR can be a potent marketing tool that builds traffic, targets key customers or clients, generates sales leads, and increases profitability. There is no better way to boost your credibility and enhance your image as competition among businesses continues to heat up.

Here are a few valuable tips and suggestions on how to leverage your participation in a tradeshow and take your business to the next level:

### 1. Utilize Free Promotional Tools Available Through the Show

First and foremost, you should find out what free promotional tools are available through the show organizer, such as media lists, a website for posting news releases, at show press room, new product showcases, and so on. Ask the trade show organizers about THEIR Public Relations plans. It would be nice if you could "ride the coattails" of the show's promotional activities. If they are issuing a press release about the event, you may ask if your company can be mentioned as an exhibitor. You can even offer your participation as a case study for their marketing materials.

### 2. Initiate Media Outreach

If you are launching a new product or service, make sure to reach out to the most appropriate newspapers and trade publications ahead of the event. In addition, you may review the editorial calendars of industry trade publications. Just keep in mind that most magazines have long lead deadlines, so be sure to make contact early. If tradeshow management does not supply a media list, you can search for past articles on the event, simply because the same reporter may be assigned to cover the show again. There is no need to hold a press conference unless you are introducing the next iPhone, as the cost may far outweigh the benefits.

### 3. Create a Stand Alone Website or Product Page

If you are launching a tradeshow specific website, you should add a lot of interesting, valuable, and relevant content and use your special event URL in all show related correspondence, press releases, and invitations. Make sure you can update it quickly and easily. You may also include photos, fact sheets and marketing materials. Don't forget to post a link to it from your main website. Remember: a well-managed website could be the difference in converting leads to customers.

### 4. Try to Secure Speaking Engagements

Inquire about potential speaking opportunities, either as a keynote speaker, and on the exhibit floor presentation or pavilion, or as a participant in a panel discussion. Speaking engagements require extensive planning and creativity, so start early and identify a few topics that would be of high interest to your target market. To make a bigger impact, focus on subjects and issues you are most comfortable presenting.

One thing is for sure: the most successful Public Relations practitioners don't just distribute press releases and wait for the phone to ring. It doesn't work that way...They take the time up front to develop powerful messaging and communications strategies that initiate discussions, influence decisions, and ultimately lead to publicity and purchasing action.

I hope my recommendations above will inspire you to take action, get the most of each tradeshow and experience the success you deserve.

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