

Tradeshows Tip Sheet

This month: Dealing with the MEDIA

Working with the Media

In a perfect world, every time you introduce a new product or put out a press release, the media will jump to see what you're up to and rush your story into print, on TV, on the radio or online.

So when that doesn't happen, you may ask: 'what's wrong with the media?' Yeah, why don't they get it?

In this issue of the Tradeshows Tip Sheet, we'll look at some ways to get the media to notice you and – more important – how to get your clients and potential customers to notice you, too.

While dealing the press is a book-worthy subject, this issue will focus on the as-

The Media Event

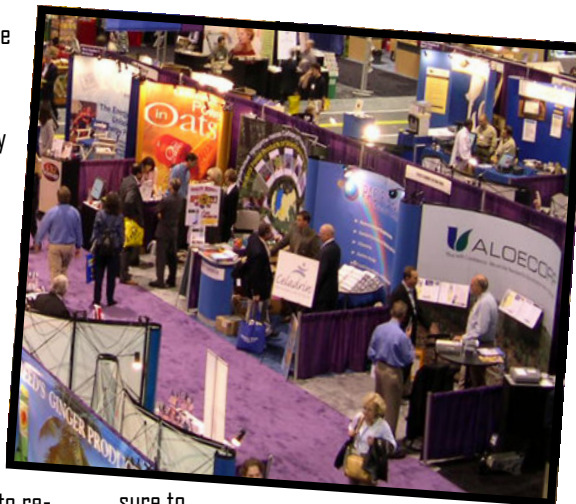
The press event, or media event, can be a good way to draw attention. *Can*, we say, because when you hold a press event, you'd better have something new to show or some important information to release. Otherwise, don't bother – the press is not too kind to a lukewarm or minor product upgrade. Think MAC – but perhaps on a smaller scale. Every year Apple saves their biggest news for the MacWorld Expo – and always manages to get a lion's share of the news cycle.

Your media event probably will be much smaller. But that doesn't mean you can't make an impact. Invite experts and interested parties. The right news or new product can bring them all out. Be

sure to invite current clients, industry reporters and (in this day and age) a few prominent bloggers. Chances are good that a blogger will post something within hours of the event.

Of course your hottest prospects should be invited, too. Nothing like a little 'insider's invitation' to show them you want them to be a part of your world. It's almost like having a backstage pass to a big-name rock show. Okay, maybe not THAT big...

But back to the trade show. If you're attending a trade show, you're competing with hundreds, if not thousands, of other companies hungry for free publicity.



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The media have their own agenda – the better you understand what they want, the more likely you are to deliver it to them



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Create your own media event ~~ Bring in the press, your clients and prospects and put on a show. But make sure you have something NEW to talk about!

Show Management and the PR Team

Show organizers know how important publicity is to the overall success of the show. Once you have planned your internal strategy, work with the show's PR team to best maximize their skills and resources. Explain your goals, learn their deadlines; work with them for opportunities for press attention.

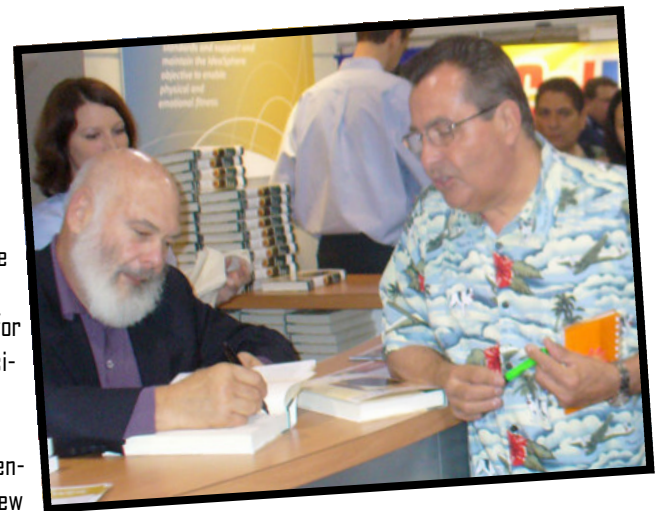
Often the tradeshow's press section of the website is the most-travelled segment. The PR Team's goal is to promote the trade show as a whole, but often that means playing up the individual companies and plugging their stories – which is where you come in, so have your story ready.

If you're relatively new to the show, or to dealing with the show's PR Team, plan to meet with them over the phone several months before the show to discuss your objectives and ask for feedback on what might be the best way to get attention within their system. By building a relationship with them early and showing them how great your team is to work with, chances increase that you'll get a good push from them when the time is ripe.

The Celebrity Factor

Using a celebrity in your promotion can be a great attention-getter if you have the budget. Having a hired gun in your booth for a few hours a day will not only bring in visitors, it'll get you mentioned in the trade show's press releases. Depending on the brightness of your star, it may get you mentioned in local press (Joe Namath visits new pantyhose booth!).

That said, putting a celebrity in your booth may have a downside. Celebrities can be expensive and temperamental. However, any astute celebrity knows that if he is too unpredictable he won't be getting too many of these well-paying gigs.



Ultimately, you'll have to decide if having the celebrity in your booth is worth the cost to bring in loads of people that just want to rub elbows with a star but may never become customers.

Bottom Line on Working with the Media

The press is there to get the word out – and if you have a good story, they'll have no qualms about publicizing it. If your story has no sizzle or no real 'hook' they won't bite. First figure out your story. Then mold the story the best you can so that it gets the attention of the media.

If you're new to creating publicity, we highly

recommend you check out **Joan Stewart's "The Publicity Hound"** website at www.publicityhound.com and be sure to get her 89-part series on writing press releases that capture attention (it's free!).

When it comes to media, as in anything –keep trying and don't give up!