

## Be Your Own PR Machine...for Free!

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### *Tips to Help You Get Media Exposure*

Almost any seasoned PR professional will tell you that **YOU are your own best PR representative.**

You know yourself and your firm better than anyone else, so why sink thousands of dollars into hiring a PR firm - when you can do it all yourself?

Handling your own public relations is really not as difficult as you might think. You have to be organized, a little media savvy, and aggressive!

Here are some tips to help you **be your own PR pro.**

#### **1. Get comfortable with the media landscape.**

Remember, media is a business, and the companies who are in the media - like TV stations, newspapers, and magazines - are looking for ratings and to sell commercial time and space. The only way they can do that is by serving their specific audience.

Before you pitch an idea or a publication, really know what the story is about and how the target audience might be interested. In other words, **have a "hook."**

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You could even begin the pitch by saying, "I've got a story for you that I know your audience will be interested in."

## 2. Identify new angles to your story.

Chances are the story you're pitching has been covered before, so find a new angle - or a new way to tell the story. This will help make your pitch sound fresh and original.

## 3. Be humble.

It's okay to be aggressive, but remember you're not Bill Gates.

**Start small and stay local - at first.** Research a database of newspapers and magazines in your area that might be interested in your content. You could even try college newspapers, the neighborhood paper, or a free industry newsletter.

Thinking small at first will help you get the fire started and learn how to deal with media in the process.

## 4. Give a great interview!

Reporters are almost always rushed, stressed, and impatient. Their careers revolve around a deadline. **Work at their pace and be available** when they call on you for an interview.

When giving an interview, be brief. **Give short, meaningful soundbites.** Pick the three most interesting points about your story and make them fast and interesting.

## 5. Back off when it's time.

**Know the line between marketing yourself properly and being annoying.** If your pitch gets rejected, you may ask what it needs to make it publishable. But in some cases, understand that it may never be right in the editor's eyes.

Mind their signals, and accept rejection when it's time.

## 6. Mind what you say.

Be cautious about what you say to a reporter. **WHAT YOU SAY CAN HURT YOU!** Even if you're not quoted or you say something off the record, a reporter might use your words to color the slant of the article.

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Don't be tight-lipped, but don't be too free with your words either. Contrary to popular opinion, not all press is good press!

There is no need to handle the media with kid gloves. Reporters know what they're doing. They can also be quite fun!

And remember, **they need you as much as you need them!**

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