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5 Ways Small Business Owners Can Get High-Quality Publicity in One Hour, One Day or One Week Edit

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I thumbed through my copy of SUCCESS Magazine the other day when I saw eighth-grader Lily DeBell's sweet smiling face and her all-natural, handmade dancewear for young dancers.

Wow. If a 13-year-old entrepreneur can make it into SUCCESS, why can't I? Why can't my clients?

WE CAN!

Sometimes I feel about marketing the way I feel about exercise. You know you should exercise, you know it's good for you, you even feel great once it's done.



It's the same with publicity. You know it drives people to your website, you know it grows your list, you know it builds your credibility and cache . . . but getting there, showing up, not letting life derail you . . . that's the hard part.

Create an event, tour or demonstration & invite the media

Someone asked me recently "How can I get publicity efficiently?"

I wasn't sure what that meant at first. Then I saw sweet Lily DeBell and remembered I hadn't moved the dial on my quest to get into SUCCESS.

Nurturing relationships with the press can take time. In our instant gratification culture we want results and we want them NOW . . . even when we haven't put the time in.

We say we don't have the time, when it's more like we don't make the time. Today I'm calling myself out on this and if this sounds familiar, I'm calling you out too.

There's time. Dare I say it? There's more than enough time.

Today I want to prove it and show you how you can get press when you only have an hour, a day or a week to spare.

ONE HOUR PUBLICITY

Efficient PR Strategy #1 – Subscribe to Help A Reporter Out (HARO)

HARO is Match.com for the media and media sources (aka you). If you do nothing else in the post, make sure you do this. It takes seconds to sign up and it's a free service that deliver media opportunities to your inbox three times daily. Easy right?

Hot Tip#1: Sign up to receive queries from reporters covering your field. If you're a health coach, get the Lifestyle & Fitness queries only. If you're a business owner, get the Business & Financial queries. If you don't specify the category, you'll get all the categories and pretty soon you'll just ignore HARO because it'll be overwhelming trying to scan through everything.

Hot Tip#2: Have someone else skim and evaluate the queries for you so all you need to do is focus on the pitch when he or she finds a good fit. Take 30 minutes to set some criteria, train someone how to find the type of opportunities you want and let them be your filter. Less time and more directed, focused energy on your part. Don't have an assistant? Anyone can look for opportunities for you as long as they know how to read. Once you get the hang of HARO I promise it'll be a mere moments out of your day.



Upside? The press comes to you.

Downside? Competition . . . HARO has millions of subscribers so you have to respond at lightning speed and be a perfect fit (and follow these other tips (<http://thestorystylist.com/how-you-can-easily-get-free-publicity-for-your-coaching-business-today/>)).

Efficient PR Strategy #2 – Offer your own photo/video

One day my husband looked out his office window and saw a truck on fire. An avid reader of the local newspaper, he quickly snapped a photo and sent the image to the city's beat reporter. An engineer, not a marketer, publicist, best-selling author – he didn't even have a relationship with the reporter. What he did have . . . timely and compelling content the paper needed.

Upside? Anyone can be a citizen journalist

Downside? Being in the right place at the right time when the media outlet can't get there before you

Efficient PR Strategy #3 – Offer to be an expert source

Look for opportunities to piggyback your expertise on current events, trends, weather, holidays, studies (yours or someone else's), then pick up the phone and offer yourself up as an expert source who's ready to opine and offer valuable insight.

Upside? Major credibility as an expert and thought leader . . . and if you do well the first time, chances are they'll call on you the next time and the next and the next . . .

Downside? You better be buttoned up and ready to go on the spot. Generally this works best for thought leaders. You need to be on top of the news and quick on your feet. Ideally you know who to call at the outlet directly and can communicate how your opinion and commentary can enhance the story.

ONE DAY PUBLICITY

Efficient PR Strategy #4 – Send out a “Tips” Release

A “tips” release is a press release that offers helpful, valuable content that also positions your product or service. When you see magazine headlines that say “10 Tips to Increase Your Energy” or “Dirty Dozen Foods to Avoid”, often times these articles sprout from a tips release.



One of my clients manufactured headlights. If headlights can get in the press using a tips press release, you can too! The main feature of these headlights – brighter, whiter lights – help drivers see better at night. Better sight, safer driving. In addition to the headlights, we brainstormed other safe driving tips, then we sent the release out for Car Care Month (yes, that’s a real thing), daylight savings time and summer (road trips!). One release that took probably took a week from start to finish to brainstorm, write and distribute . . . three times/year. Sometimes the release appear verbatim. Other times it lead to interviews or another story.

If you produce content (blogs, emails, programs) you’re sitting on a gold mine of tips releases RIGHT NOW! Don’t reinvent the wheel! Look at what you already have, turn it into a press release and get it out on a newswire. Send it to business journals and publications your clients read. Find ways to repurpose and distribute it multiple times/year (or to different media outlets).

ONE WEEK PUBLICITY

Efficient PR Strategy #5 – Throw a party & invite the media

Years ago, I promoted several state energy efficiency programs using media events. These programs were technical and scientific. The method of making homes and buildings more energy efficient could feel like you needed a mechanical engineering degree just to talk about it. Instead of trying to explain the concepts and the theories and the hows and whys of how it all works, why it’s good for homeowners and businesses (and the economy and the environment) we created home performance assessment tours. We’d set a date and line up a real customer, real home or building and a real contractor and invite the media to follow along on the tour, ask questions and hear about the results from a real person (Ok, so sometimes this takes a few weeks).

We did dozens of these tours and the media always came. We were able to tie energy efficiency into seasonal hooks. It was a well-oiled, repeatable strategy that worked every time.

What can you show the media? What kind of event can you host to get the media to come to you? Get creative and have fun!

WARNING: Do not call your event a press conference. Press conferences are for politicians and crisis communications, so unless your event falls into one of those camps consider it a media event.

Upside? The media comes to you



Downside? Like any event, a media event takes planning and attention to every last detail. There are many moving parts and there's no guarantee the media will show up. I always felt sick before every event until the first reporter showed up.

Hot tip #1: Invite a relevant celebrity to attend the event or be a spokesperson to really get the media's attention. We brought in former This Old House host Steve Thomas to represent the program and lead some of the early home energy assessment media events to get the ball rolling.

Hot tip #2: Expect the media to show up and prepare ahead of time in case they don't. Hire a photographer and/or videographer and pitch the media again after your event if some (or all) don't make it. Send a photo to your local business editors with a suggested caption. Send a 2 or 3 minute video clip (aka b-roll) to the TV producers . . . as long as there's a warm relationship there. In fact, if a reporter says they want to cover your event, you can even set the expectation ahead of time and say "I know in your line of work news breaks and things happen beyond your control. If for some reason you can't make it to the event, would it be OK to send you a photo and a press release after." Empathize, be helpful and don't let a media opportunity go to waste.

If you need help presenting and booking yourself with publications, radio, television and online media and you're not ready to invest in a five-figure retainer with a PR agency, I invite you to apply for a **complimentary consultation** (<https://thestorystylist.com/consult/>) with me.

Which one of these (or other) efficient PR strategies will you try? Let us know which one and why in the comments below.

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