

A LOW COST WAY TO GET NOTICED

I think we can all agree the reason we are in business is to make money, right? One of the most important steps to making money is to get noticed – in any way. There is the old adage of “any publicity is good publicity”. That may have been true prior to the existence of the internet, but today, memories are long, and the social conscience and demand for excellence from today’s consumer makes that statement no longer true. The truth is, however, **good publicity** is an excellent and cost effective way to get your message out there, in a format that will capture the attention of consumers.

A common complaint is the cost of advertising puts a strain on budgets and compromises have to be made. As marketing budgets continue to be squeezed it is remarkable that more companies are not embracing the use of public relations as an important and growing part of their marketing and communications plans. Publications, dailies, news programs, and social media are always looking for interesting stories, may they be human interest, companies that are doing good things or innovative products or marketing. If you have a campaign that makes a splash, you could have national coverage without having to spend a penny. In today’s social media heavy world, the ideal would be to have an ad, photograph or a video go viral. People will buy your product, or come to your store just out of curiosity. What a great way to generate trial.

To make this work you of course can’t just sit back and hope it happens. It requires planning and the engagement of someone who knows how to get your story out there for little to no cost. How do you get the word out? How do you work this into your plan?

Selling to today’s consumer is no longer about highlighting a product or service’s features and benefits (particularly with Millennials but that’s a whole other topic). In fact, trying to sell your product or services might actually turn off a potential customer. Increasingly consumers don’t want to be told what to buy, they need a reason. This is where publicity, the use of the news media to your advantage can sometimes be more effective, particularly in conjunction with a full program.

For example, many grocery stores are hosting health and nutrition seminars. A well worded news release that talks about the importance of nutrition in combating obesity, child development or promoting longevity could lead to coverage, or at the very least, an article that can be sent out to loyal customers and or potential new ones, could bring in traffic, or at the very least get you top of mind.

This type of marketing must be a multi-dimensional program that will be able to provide 360 degree support. In-store, there must be signage and information about the program, flyers should have a some mention and staff must be aware of these programs and be able to speak knowledgeably. Whether it’s nutrition seminars, or a new product line or a new look for your store, focusing on how it can benefit not just individual shoppers but a larger community or purpose, will make efforts much more effective.

