

Marketing Minute ~ Best Time to Pitch to the Media is NOW!

Now through January 4th is the VERY BEST time of the year to pitch ideas because good sources are in short supply. Some companies close for Christmas vacation. Schools and colleges are on break. People are busily shopping, cooking and traveling (and watching football). The last thing most of them think about is pitching.

That means lots of opportunities for you and your business. Here are three tips that you should keep in mind:

- 1) When you pitch, let journalists and bloggers know you're familiar with their work. Suggest your ideas for a specific section of the newspaper, or a pre- or post-holiday TV talk show segment.
- 2) Suggest at least two other sources, with phone numbers and email addresses, who can round out the story, filling in additional details to lend the story strength and interest.
- 3) If you're trying to get onto TV, mention enticing visuals. A pet expert might suggest bringing to the studio six types of holiday decorations that can be harmful to pets if swallowed. And bring along a favorite cute four-legged pup or cat, too, as a prop. The TV cameras LOVE cute pets.

Whenever you pitch, your Number One goal should never be to generate publicity. Rather, your goal should be to help journalists as much as you can. Help them do their jobs, and you might not generate a publicity hit immediately. But, they'll view you as a golden source, and they might return later asking you for an interview for an even bigger story. Or a blogger might invite you to guest-blog.

Keep these few thoughts in mind when you build this relationship with media representatives:

- 1) Offer to fill in at the last minute if a TV or radio talk show host needs someone to interview, or a guest cancels due to illness. Extend this offer over the holidays, particularly during the weeks before and after Christmas.
- 2) Tip off your contacts to what the bloggers are writing about. Help journalists be 'in the know.'
- 3) If you're a blogger and you link to a particular news story from within one of your postings, let the reporter know. You might be a potential interview subject.

Obviously, reporters and show producers use blogging quite often to search for material for stories or show topics. They have such tight deadlines, it is impossible to spend time making calls, searching the local gossip sheets or calling people 'out there' for ideas. They find it all online. And that's where you should go to 'find them' and 'help them do their jobs'. And benefit in the long run.

I don't have time to blog myself, and most of you don't either. But, there are those who can provide you that service, who keep business people like us in touch with the media, and vice versa. One of those is Peter Shankman, a PR/marketing man, and his HARO connection. That's all I'm going to say, because any more would be giving away my secrets. When in doubt, or in search, Google. Be creative with your search phrases. Good luck with that. Just make sure to do it...NOW!

Many thanks to "The Publicity Hound's Tips of the Week," where I got some of these ideas. This ezine features tips, tricks and tools for generating free publicity, always a wonderful thing. You can subscribe at <http://www.publicityhound.com/> and receive by email the handy cheat sheet "89 Reasons to Send a News Release."

