**How to Use Social Media for Your PR**



No one cares about your latest press release especially on social media. Built on a pay-it–forward and play well with others, social media can’t be approached with a “What’s in it for me?” (aka WII-FM) attitude. To attract attention on social media, change your approach from pushing press releases to being a go-to resource.

Using social media for [PR](http://heidicohen.com/public-relations-definition/) is about building a community around your business and creating content your audience wants. Here are **ten social media tactics for PR** that focus on how you can help others on social media while building relationships for your clients.

1. **Get rid of the one-size-fits-all pitch**. Don’t assume journalists are waiting for your fill-in-the-blank releases without requesting them. As an experienced journalist and blogger, let me tell you that they feel like spam and get deleted as soon as they appear in my inbox. (Check out the views of [Social Media Explorer’s Jason Falls](http://www.socialmediaexplorer.com/online-public-relations/the-bloggers-guide-to-prs-email-pitches/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) on email pitches.) Only use your old-fashioned press pitches for regulatory reporting reasons.
2. **Build a social media following.**Engage on a variety of social media platforms and expand your circle of acquaintances. Connect with family, friends and business colleagues. Actively participate in the conversation, such as [Twitter chats](http://heidicohen.com/twitter-chat-guide/) and Meetups. Your goal is to have a base of followers and associates who can help you spread your message when needed. Remember, social media is a two way street where reciprocity matters. For example, [Ford’s Scott Monty](http://www.scribd.com/scottmonty/d/9204719-The-Ranger-Station-Fire%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) was able to diffuse a potential PR crisis because he had a large Twitter following and he sent 138 tweets in one day.
3. **Become a go-to resource**. Take a page from [Peter Shankman](http://shankman.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), founder of Help-A-Reporter, and help get journalists the information they’re seeking and introduce them to other resources, even if they’re not your client. Leverage your social media contacts to help journalists and get them a bit of press. Be succinct and to the point. When I need information, I have a set of contacts I go to and they turn around my requests with lightening speed.
4. **Forget the “Oprah or Bust” approach** **to media attention.** Don’t just focus on getting a mention on major television talk or news shows. Expand your media horizons. Plant lots of smaller stories to build word of mouth and don’t underestimate your story’s ability to have legs. Think in terms of getting exposure to new audiences. Consider adding a blog to your organization’s content mix to create your own media entity and following. Additionally, use social media news matchmaker [Help-A-Reporter](http://www.helpareporter.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). It’s a free, thrice daily emailing containing media requests. Use it for yourself and your clients.
5. **Add to the action**. Leverage hot topics and current trends to create related hooks for your clients. These stories can be used on your blog and Facebook as well as by journalists who are always looking for new angles. [David Meerman Scott calls this newsjacking](http://www.davidmeermanscott.com/books/newsjacking/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). You can publish these stories on your own blog as well as third party media sites.
6. **Intrigue people with**[**your story**](http://heidicohen.com/how-to-find-stories-for-your-brand-within-your-organization/)**.**Build an irresistible story around your product or business. Then seek opportunities to share your tale and extend the narrative. Understand what pulls your target audience into your message. Share different variations of your tale on your blog, Tumblr or Facebook. For example, the Woods Hole Inn created a blog about their [red chair’s travels](http://theredchairblog.blogspot.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) across different inns on Cape Cod making it a ready-made local news story.
7. **Engage with the press on social media.** Many established media outlets both online and offline use a combination of blogs, Facebook and Twitter to connect with readers and viewers. Use these outlets to engage directly on topics of interest to your business and connect with the journalist in the form of following them on Twitter and commenting on their blog posts.
8. **Get into the picture.** With the meteoric rise of [photographic](http://heidicohen.com/7-ways-photos-support-marketing-hint-social-media-included/) sites like Pinterest and Instagram, consider how you can get your business, client or product in the picture. Use photographs of your product to intrigue prospects and customers. Also, get your customers involved by having them send in their images. A number of news sites like the Weather Channel display viewers’ videos and photographs.
9. **Do their work for them**. Another way to leverage the media’s audience is to write [guest blog posts](http://heidicohen.com/guest-blogging-don%E2%80%99t-forget-what-mom-taught-you/). This works well for blogs in your category as well as for some media sites that solicit guest posts. Understand that you must supply the guest blog post in return for being exposed to the blog’s audience and getting a link back to your website. When contacting a blogger, make sure you check whether they have guest post policies before sending them your story.
10. **Test new social media platforms**. Find ways to get your client featured in different forums. Social media options include being a guest on a Twitter chat, creating a video interview, and uploading your latest presentation. Don’t underestimate the value of emerging social media platforms. This works very well for smaller companies that are willing to take more risks. For example, Exude lipstick tested a photo spread using social commerce site, [Svpply](https://svpply.com/exudelipstick/collections/57669/The_Look_Summer_2012%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

*Source*: http://heidicohen.com/social-media-10-pr-tactics/