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News They Can Use

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American Salon



It's no secret: An effective public relations campaign is one of the most effective long-term ways to boost your bottom line. It generates a greater understanding of your products and services, creates awareness of your company's success stories, and establishes the image and message you want to project about your salon. Even if the services of a professional PR team aren't within your budget, you can take a do-it-yourself approach to getting yourself noticed, starting with writing and sending an effective press release. Katherine M. Rothman, CEO of the New York City-based public relations firm KMR Communications, offers the following pointers.

MAKE IT NEWSWORTHY. "Understanding what is not appropriate press release material is as important as understanding what is," says Rothman. "The main point to keep in mind is that there has to be an inherent benefit to the consumer and knowledge that can be gleaned from a release." For example, "Salon xyz to undergo summer renovation" and "Salon xyz celebrates five years in business" are not nearly as newsworthy as "Salon xyz performs new straightening technique" and "Salon xyz offers tips for treating sun-damaged hair." So choose your news wisely.

KEEP IT SHORT. A press release should be no more than two pages long and should include the relative points of who, what, where, why, when and how. When in doubt, keep it simple.

GRAB THE READER'S ATTENTION. Structure your release smartly. Make your headline eye-catching so readers will want to keep reading, and keep the lines of type double-spaced for easy reading. Be sure to include contact information, including your salon's Web site, where it will easily be seen.

BE A SAVVY SENDER. Although it comes with a price, the best, most time-efficient way to gather a media database is to subscribe to a service that will allow you to access accurate media contacts and develop lists online. Bacons (www.bacons.com/) and Burrelles (www.burrellesluce.com/) are two examples.

KEEP IT TIMELY. Always remember to tie in a topic with a seasonal trend, celebrity or news event, and be mindful of specific media timing. For example, magazines operate months in advance of "real time," working on their holiday issues in August. Newspapers, on the other hand, publish in real time. Pitch your releases when the time is appropriate and follow up verbally with a phone call.

LOOK FOR FEEDBACK. "The most important component to keep in mind when writing a press release is to ask yourself if you would be interested in your topic if you were not in the salon/spa industry," says Rothman. One way to measure this is to show your release to friends who are not in the business and see if it piques their attention. Their feedback could provide new, insightful information for making your release more effective. For more information or tips from Katherine Rothman, visit www.kmrcommunications.com/ or call (212) 213-6444.

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