

# DERMASCOPE

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## Do-it-Yourself PR for Spas



Going to a spa and being pampered on a regular basis is something most people would covet. The fact is, such luxuries are not affordable for everyone, so some people have to duplicate the experience with DIY at-home methods. The same holds true when it comes to spas and professional public relations – the latter is not in the budget for every business. This often leaves spa owners in despair, wondering, “How am I going to gain new clients when I don’t have money to promote or hire a PR firm?” This is where the do-it-yourself PR comes in. While it’s not as ideal as engaging a PR professional who dedicates themselves to this full-time and has years

of experience, there are DIY methods that are good alternatives to get your message out and take you to the next level economically so that you can afford to hire a quality PR firm down the road to take that weight off your shoulders.

## **PRESS RELEASES**

Write your own press releases and tailor the pitch to your audience, not your own agenda. The worst mistake when writing a press release is to structure it like an ad. There is no beauty blogger or editor who wants to read that your spa is, “gorgeous, spacious, with a caring staff that provides XYZ services in a serene environment.” That is just blatantly self-promotional. Think like a client and ask yourself, “Why should I care?” The press release must be informative and, ideally, tie into a season, holiday, trend, or celebrity. For example, if it’s Valentine’s Day, why not offer a chocolate “fanny facial” and send a release about that? If the holidays are approaching, consider a release on “How to safeguard against skin care emergencies before the holidays.” As trite as it sounds, you have to give the consumers news they can use. When this information is then featured on “high authority” websites that cover beauty, they will often hyperlink to your website, which will help to increase your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Online Reputation Management (ORE). In addition, it will result in more clicks to your website. The media coverage itself is a great showcase for a press section of your website and the ongoing marketing of your business. Online outlets are a great medium to pursue because the content is shareable through social media. Do not e-mail the media to follow up on each release you send. Editors and bloggers can receive hundreds of e-mails per day. If they are interested in what you have pitched, they will be in touch with you.

## **FINDING THE RIGHT MEDIA CONTACTS**

Quality PR firms use expensive subscription databases to find media members. These can cost thousands of dollars annually. A cost-effective way to target media is to devise a media wish list. Let’s say you want to pitch to outlets such as [newbeauty.com](http://newbeauty.com), [refinery29.com](http://refinery29.com), [elle.com](http://elle.com), or [instyle.com](http://instyle.com). Go to these sites and see

who is writing their spa or beauty stories. If their e-mail address is available on the website, pitch to them using that. If it's not available, find them on LinkedIn or Twitter and see if you can locate an e-mail address. If not, you can also send them a pitch through LinkedIn once they have accepted you as a contact. Make a list of local television stations, call each station, ask who the assignment editor is and get their e-mail address. You can also sign up for [rocketreach.com](http://rocketreach.com), which will give you five free media e-mail searches per month.

### **HIRE A SOCIAL MEDIA INTERN**

Today's college kids are social media ninjas. They are also very adept at devising well designed branded graphics for your social media and video. In addition, some can design logos and branded marketing materials. One need only pay a daily stipend to these interns who are likely receiving course credit. A great way to find interns in your area is to visit [joinhandshake.com](http://joinhandshake.com). Handshake is the official network to reach college talent across the nation. You can post your opportunity there or call the career office directly of colleges or universities you wish to target.

### **SET UP A BLOG ON YOUR WEBSITE**

Blogging is good for SEO because it helps with a number of things that are important ranking factors. When you have a blog that is updated regularly with blog posts that are high quality and on topics relevant to your audience, it can make a huge difference to how your overall website performs in the search engines. Just as with press releases, write about topics you feel would be of interest to your audience. Be sure to post once a week. Posts can range from content on spa etiquette, how a day at the spa can benefit your health, how to winter-proof your skin, what to eat to get glowing skin, and more. If you need ideas, search the top beauty blogs and see what is trending.

### **OFFER A SELFIE STATION INSIDE YOUR SPA**

It is the rare individual that leaves a spa feeling worse mentally or physically than they did prior to coming in. Most people feel joyous and positive about the way they look. In today's Instagram world, this is the most opportune time for a selfie. To encourage this, purchase a step and repeat. What is this you ask? A step and repeat banner is a publicity backdrop used primarily for event photography, printed with a repeating pattern such as brand logos or emblems that are visible in photographs of the individuals standing in front of it. After a customer has had a treatment, encourage them to take a selfie and post it on their social media. The step and repeat will have your establishment's logo and name on it. With dozens of customers per week sharing on social media, imagine how your social media following will grow.

Whether it is social media posting, media pitching, or blogging, all of these must be done with consistency. Being known in the spa business is not so different from Hollywood fame. The more your name is seen and heard, the bigger you become and the more ingrained you are with the public. One media placement does not solidify a business. PR is like a business game and you have to be in it to win it.



*KMR Communications is a beauty public relations firm that was established in 1998 by CEO Katherine M. Rothman. The firm was named one of the top three beauty PR firms in the nation. Their clients have included every entity of the beauty industry, such as Rene Furterer Hair Care, Klorane Hair Care, Oasis Day Spa, Bosley, Aubrey Organics, Sothys Skin Care, and GM Collin, to name just a few. They are adept at representing startups, as well as established brands. The firm was also one of the pioneers representing aesthetic physicians such as dermatologists and plastic surgeons. They understand the beauty industry both on a business and scientific level. [kmrcommunications.com](http://kmrcommunications.com)*

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