

Expert Women Who Speak...

Volume 5

Speak Out!

Life and success strategies
by women, for women.

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PUBLICITY AND THE POWER OF MEDIA

Fifteen minutes of Fame. “In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes.” Andy Warhol wrote these words to describe the growing commodification of everyday life in 1968. With the advent of modern technologies including the Internet and satellite communications it seems Warhol may have been prophetic.

The question is ‘how do get yours’? Do you pay for it with your hard earned cash, or do you ‘play’ for it through media events, reality shows, fund-raisers, or other creative promotional activities? Whichever method you choose gaining publicity can be expensive. Whether you ‘pay’ for it or you ‘play’ for it, getting fame for your name and/or product always comes with a price tag. Learning how to read the tag, and when to spend the money can make the difference between promotional success and costly errors.

Here is an example from a client I recently assisted:

“Sorry to bother you, I am really busy today, and need to make a quick decision.” The caller stated breathlessly, “I have this opportunity and I just don’t know what to do. A friend has sent me a media kit for the magazine she represents. She tells me I would have an exclusive listing it and if I advertise they may even run an article on me in an upcoming issue. I need the publicity, but is this publication a good option? Their readership is 30,000 people – yet it says their membership is only 7,500. The magazine has a long shelf life so within two years over 60,000 people may see my advertisement. They’ll even design my ad. I hate this part of my business; it’s really no fun. I understand the need to promote myself but how do I know when to pay for it?”

Though it may not be about advertising, we are each faced with similar challenging decisions daily. Exciting opportunities to promote ourselves, market our products or publicize our services. But which method works best? How do we know

where to put our marketing and promotional dollars and energies? Should we purchase advertising space in order to receive ‘free’ editorial coverage? As the above conversation continued I was able to clarify that in this example ‘readership’ referred to the estimated number of readers per issue, and the ‘long shelf life’ referred to the projected time the publication may be kept in a household. Was the opportunity too good to pass up? Maybe. But the real point of the story is about regaining focus and enjoying or having fun with marketing. For this client of mine, she needed help to see that she was not prepared at that moment to make a decision regarding the advertising opportunity, therefore it was stressful – and no fun.

The focus of this chapter is for the small business owner or entrepreneur. You may have already learned that impulsive marketing decisions are an inefficient use of time and money. In this chapter, we’ll look at the same process that I traveled with the client in the example to develop a marketing and media strategy that eliminated her stress resulting from ‘too good to be true’ advertising buys, and changed her attitudes towards marketing and promoting herself – from awkward and costly to mysterious and fun. You will learn basic marketing terms, determine how to describe your product for advertising, and discover a few tips and tricks on maximizing media opportunities. It is a four-step process that includes:

- 1) Clarifying Terms → marketing definitions
- 2) Distilling the Essence → knowing your product
- 3) Circling the Target → hitting your market
- 4) The Art and the Science → making play pay

To follow this up, we'll look at how to strategically and efficiently use various types of media to get your message across. If you want to learn some key nuts and bolts of marketing that save time and money, read on!

Clarifying the Terms

Advertising, Publicity, Marketing, Public Relations and Promotion are all terms used to describe the act of communicating a message to the public. Each discipline fulfills a specific role in your marketing plan, as illustrated in The Circus:

The circus is coming to town and you paint a sign saying, "Circus is coming to Fairgrounds Sunday," that's Advertising. If you put the sign on the back of an elephant and walk him through town, that's a Promotion. If the elephant escapes and walks through the Mayor's flower bed, that's Publicity. If you can get the mayor to laugh about it, that's Public Relations. And, if you planned the whole thing, that's Marketing!

~ Original Source Unknown

You may not be creating a marketing strategy for a three-ring circus, but it is still important to distinguish between the terms. A well-rounded strategy includes planned activities from each discipline, thereby maximizing brand awareness and stretching your marketing dollars.

Distilling the Essence

Learning to define the *bare essence* of your product can be the most difficult part of your market strategy. The professionals at Arnold Communications overcame this challenge in 1995 when they trademarked "Drivers wanted." for Volkswagen. Or the memorable "Be all you can be." Five words efficiently describing life in the U.S. Army written by N. W. Ayer in 1981. A clear mind and open imagination is a vital part of the brand distilling process, combined with a playful 'anything goes' attitude. As you begin to define your product, keep The Circus story in mind: you are the marketer, and your

product is the ‘feelings of happiness, laughter and joy’ people receive from attending a circus – your product is NOT the elephant!

Here are some key questions to ask when discerning the essence of what you are selling or the service that you offer:

- a) What is your product?
- b) Is it your message, your skills or your service?
- c) Is it tangible or intangible?
- d) What attracts people to your product?

When brainstorming on the last question, take time to visualize what it is you deliver to the public. Place yourself in the position of the customer. For example:

- Credit Unions – a sense of belonging
- Kleenex – being nurtured
- Pepsi – feeling young

What tangible or intangible object do you deliver that answers the basic need of your customer? The answer to that question will form the foundation of your marketing strategy. If you are still uncertain of the essence of your product, ask a friend or client to describe how they feel when using your product, and what need your product fulfills for them.

The following exercise will help you with this process. On the left, right down the essence or experience that you offer your client. Let your mind wander and write down every thought or impression – even the nonsensical or humorous ones:

- A sense of pride – from feeling honest authentic
- A sense of joy – inner happiness

- Feeling sensual – the scent of perfume
- _____ - _____
- _____ - _____
- _____ - _____
- _____ - _____

Circling the Target

Throughout the first step of the market plan, we focused on distilling the bare essence of your product – and having fun doing it. In step two of the strategy, you will decide who your customer is. Knowing your customer allows you to focus your marketing thereby reducing your costs from ‘overspill’ into markets that have no need, want or desire for your offerings. Remember when you were a child – how did you get other children to play in your sandbox? You had to be visible, in the right playground with the brightest toys, and ready to share!

The marketplace is just another sandbox. Who do you want to attract? Try the following exercise to help find who you really want to attract:

- Draw a large circle on a blank sheet of paper.
- Inside the circle write the names and/or description of who is currently using your product e.g. nurses, Rita Jones
- These names will form your primary or main marketing targets.
- Next around the outside of the circle, write the names and/or descriptions of who influences your primary targets. e.g. Patients, Rita’s family

- This will form your secondary target or ‘influencers.’
- On another page create drawings of your customers. Have fun with this stage – it is ‘out of the box’ thinking that gets products noticed. If you know where they play – go to their playground.
- Visualize each of the targets:
 - What is their gender, their age, their marital status?
 - Where do they live, shop or exercise?
 - Where do they play, pray, work?
- Draw pictures or cut photos out of magazines depicting your targets and their lifestyle. The clearer you can visualize your target, the easier it will be to communicate to them.

Reaching Without Limits

The reach of your message – how many people will hear or see it - may be limited by your time and budget. But what if you had no restraints? If anything were possible, how many people would you reach and how far would your message go? Do you want to communicate to a small community or do you want to create global awareness? Unleash your imagination and visualize your customer enjoying the benefits of your product. The following questions may help with this:

- Where are they located in?
- What mode of transportation do they use?
- Do they access your product in their home?

Nadja Piatka understands the power of reaching without limits. In 1992 Nadja was an unemployable single mother living in Edmonton Alberta. One evening she took

the time to write her marketing strategy and goals on the cardboard insert from a pair of pantyhose. One year later, she had grown her muffin baking business, Three Blondes & a Brownie, from her kitchen oven into being a national supplier to McDonald's Canada. Reaching without limits!

Nadja knew her customers and where she was most likely to reach them. Where is the best place for you to reach and communicate to your customers? Where would they be most apt to decide to use your product? While relaxing at home, or while driving their car? Again, think outside – or should I say inside – the box: a late night radio talk show effectively advertised for listeners with ads placed on the back of public restroom doors. Become intentionally aware of marketing around you – watch your competition. How are they communicating to you? Become a media savvy consumer.

The Art and the Science

*“Media buying is part art and part science – with the emphasis on art.”
Media buyer, Leo Burnett Agency*

You have now described the benefits of your product, you have a vision of who uses your product and you know geographically where to find your customers. Let your imagination continue to flow as you translate your research and insights into specific marketing objectives, media buys or publicity events. Now is time to cut through the mystery and science of marketing and create the art! Remember, the more unique your message is, the greater the likelihood of rising above the cluttered marketplace and getting into the headlines! Here is an example of an award winning, and publicity gaining marketing campaign:

Universities have unique marketing challenges. The need to promote awareness of their Unique Points of Difference (UPD) is restricted by the traditional impetus of secondary academic institutions. In 1999, I was approached by a mid-sized Canadian University to develop a marketing program to promote their UPD – a highly specialized Computer Science Degree program. We followed the above plan to create a marketing goal reduced to a simple statement: Create brand awareness within a specific target group.

Understanding and simplifying our goal allowed us to focus directly on the target by creating an ELIMINATION marketing program – a program so unique only the targeted group would respond to the call to action. We designed a national marketing campaign directed at high school students, but with a creative twist. All communication materials were written in a computer code, supported by an interactive web site where grad students offered tutorial assistance for decrypting the message.

The unusualness of the campaign attracted media attention resulting in a feature in the National Post, and articles in most provincial newspapers. Broadcast media picked up the story with evening news coverage and requested the University Science Professors be guests on regional and national talk shows. Internet sites picked up the story, and within two weeks the mid-sized Canadian University was receiving over a million hits a day on the website. The BBC covered the story and a Swedish magazine placed a graphic of the code on their cover.

Why did we receive international media coverage of a regional marketing campaign? Because we took the time to create a marketing strategy. We knew the benefits of the product – a challenging and life altering educational experience while immersed in an environment with like-minded peers. We had a clear vision of the target – an inquisitive, high achieving physics student thriving on logical problem solving, sometimes referred to as a ‘nerd’. We understood their attitudes and feelings. We knew where we could reach them – high schools, in computer science and math labs. We knew most in-school campaigns targeted girls, the school influencers, and the athletes. This group traditionally is left out of marketing focus groups. We asked ‘What would they

respond to that no one else is doing for them?’ Then we created the concept, selected our media mix, took the risk and took action!

Mixing it Up in the Media

We all turn to the media as a source of news, entertainment and relaxation. We also look to advertisements in the media as a source for information on products, services and events. Each media has strengths and weaknesses for specific marketing objectives; your challenge is to maximize the strengths, break out of the pack, and get your message heard!

Publicity

I first discovered the power of publicity in 1987 when my three year old daughter and her midwife were candidly photographed at a Home Birth rally. The next morning both of our city newspapers headlined with the photograph, her name and a caption promoting Home Birthing. My phone rang for days as home birth enthusiasts, or protesters called to express their opinions. I was instantly catapulted out of the headlines and into the headlights as news writers sought my views on the legal and legislated issues surrounding Home Births.

There are many methods for attracting free publicity, or getting into the public eye – intentionally or not. For building brand or product awareness, intentional media attention is the less risky, although not necessarily as far reaching. Press releases, press conferences or publicity stunts are all used to attract media attention, and can be a lot of

fun, but a word of caution – when the coverage is free you cannot control the pen... or the coverage.

Newspapers

Newspapers are an excellent mass media read by almost everyone (approximately 80% of the population). They offer great flexibility and are considered credible. Newspapers offer the ability to communicate detailed and complex information such as dates, telephone numbers and addresses. Most newspapers have design departments that can help you custom create your advertisement at an economical price. Purchasing advertising space in the newspaper is an approach I often recommend.

There are four main classifications of newspapers – the Daily Newspaper, the Community Newspaper, the Ethnic Newspaper and the Campus Newspaper. Look back at your marketing strategy; can you match your target within a community-based paper? Or is a daily publication more likely to reach your audience? Newspaper, as an advertising vehicle does have disadvantages: a short life span, lower grade production quality and the possibility of poor placement for your advertisement.

Lastly, newspapers rely on frequency to maximize advertising effectiveness. Frequency is a term used to describe the number of times a consumer hears or sees your message. If you are selecting newspaper as your advertising media, stretch your budget by placing a small banner ad over a number of pages, or sequential issues. Newspaper frequency can also be achieved by running your ad in the same section, on the same day of the week, over a series of weeks.

Magazines

My fascination with the world of marketing began with magazines, a media I have come to love. Magazines are intimate by nature: the relaxed state readers are in when they embrace the written word, the visual impact a publisher can make through exquisite design, and the fact that the reader is an active participant in the exchange are factors that combine to create a dedicated and powerful relationship unrivalled by any other media. This unique bond is the key reason that magazines have excelled as one of today's most popular media forms. People are loyal to their magazine subscriptions!

Magazines have a longer shelf life than newspapers, with many consumers saving magazines for years – if not decades! They offer a higher quality interface to place your product advertisements. Let your message explode off the page through the use of highly visual graphic illustrations, or photography, therefore communicating several non-verbal messages to the reader.

Like all forms of media, magazines sell mind share to marketers. This means the reader is predisposed to your message when it is placed in a publication with appropriate and relevant editorial content. As consumers consider magazines credible and non-intrusive, magazine advertisements play an integral role in the consumer's purchasing decisions. Readers *choose* to read ads in magazines.

Although magazines are relatively current, you may need to book your advertisement space months before the magazine is printed. Magazines are less economical to produce than newsprint, therefore advertising rates are much more expensive. Ask for a media kit from the publisher to get a better understanding of the Cost per Thousands (CPM's) on the rate card. This is an industry term for comparing

media – based on a number paid per every thousand readers – now take the CPM and compare it to other media to see where your dollars are best spent. But don't forget – if it's not on target – the less expensive ads may not be a bargain!

Radio

Radio is everywhere. As a media it moves you and moves with you. Radio is intrusive – catchy jingles permeate our subconscious while we are driving, while at work, on the computer or working in the kitchen.

Radio broadcast reaches more than 95% of all teens and adults. Ninety-nine percent of all Canadian households and 90% of all automobiles have radio. The strength of radio is in its ability to deliver a message to a selective audience. In your marketing strategy you profiled your target in terms of their age, sex, household income, occupation and lifestyle. These are the same criteria that define the listening audience attracted by a particular radio station's format and dayparts (slotted times of day that you can select for your ad placement) so you can focus in on who you want to send your message to and at what time of day. Production costs in radio are relatively low, and most stations have recording studios and professionals available to assist you with the recording of your creative concepts.

The downside to buying radio is the fragmentation with thousands of stations to choose from and the passivity of the listener. You may need to buy airtime in numerous time slots and on numerous stations in order to get the Gross Rating Points (GRP's similar to CPM's) or desired market penetration of your ad.

Radio stations are masters at creating and executing local market promotions. Stretch your marketing dollars by tying in with a contest or create your own on-air

promotion. Use this example as a guideline on how to maximize a small budget through radio.

An Agriculture company had a marketing objective - increase brand awareness and market share within the minds of farmers across the Prairie Provinces. Their challenges included the large area they wanted to reach, the scattered population in rural regions, a small sales force, and the added complication of a limited budget.

In response to their request, we designed a themed radio contest backed up by community newspaper ads and in-store ballot entry boxes. We sent proposals to selected stations across the prairie describing our contest, the prize package, and co-branding opportunities for the radio station on the print ads and ballot boxes. As an additional value-add we proposed to place contest information, rules and click-through entry banners on the radio station's websites.

The results:

- *Ten times the dollar value in free promotion and call in contest spots*
- *Radio sales persons were deployed to drop off ballot boxes, and to sell additional 'tag' lines at the end of the advertisements – thereby adding credibility to the contest and increasing the company brand awareness*
- *Radio station's call letters are often their web address- passive listeners could easily log on for contest information and learn more about the agriculture company in the process*

Television

Television is the most infiltrating of all media. It is the consumer's first choice for entertainment, news, sports and general information. Nearly everyone has a TV in his or her home. Consumers have given television top ratings for advertising effectiveness, and for good reason: some of the world's most memorable ad campaigns were built on their television commercials. Television is big and creates an aura of importance. If you want rapid audience penetration and endorsement of your product, television may be your answer.

But even with all of its benefits, television is still the most challenging for small businesses. A growing number of cable stations have resulted in fragmentation – the

viewer can be zipping and zapping across the airways. Purchasing spots on numerous stations may be cost prohibitive, as is the cost of producing a hard-hitting high-impact commercial.

Ask your local stations if they have 'dot spots' seven or 15 second announcements, voice-overs, sponsorship of shows, or web address spots which can be purchased for as little as \$15.00 per spot. Other economical television opportunities include Public Service Announcements (PSA's) which are often reserved for non-profit events - so this is where you can 'play' by supporting, sponsoring or hosting a fun activity that gets your product a PSA spot. In summation television can be an excellent advertising vehicle – if your customer keeps it turned on!

Outdoor Media

I find outdoor the most fun form of media. Magazines may be the sexiest, but today's outdoor campaigns are kicking up their heels and giving magazines a run for their money. If you think of outdoor advertising as billboards, posters or bus signs, think again! Outdoor media has expanded into many new arenas, from subway lit-screens to projection media; three-dimensional billboards to fully wrapped railway cars; hot air balloons, semi trailers and yes, even into hockey arena's ceilings and restrooms. It's all considered outdoor media, it's economical, bold and fun. From chalk drawings on sidewalks to full colour photo-realism murals, if you can dream it, someone can display it – cut it into a mountainside or pour it onto a block of ice.

With outdoor advertising, deciding on the creative idea may be easy, but selecting from the multiple choices - a billboard, transit shelter or park bench – is the ultimate

challenge. Go back to your marketing strategy, remember the essence of your product, where your customer is reached, and when are they most predisposed to experience your message. If you visualized them outdoors - this is your media.

To Pay or Play

Marketing is everywhere. It is exciting, vibrant, sexy and emotional. You cannot escape advertising, so why not embrace it? Make it work for you. Play with it and your efforts will pay back for you. If you are a consumer learn how to read between the lines; if you are a businessperson with a product to sell learn to use advertising to connect with your customer.

Now it's time to pull the pieces together and complete your plan. Create a grid or use a year-at-a-glance calendar, armed with all of your research and insights, and start to fill in the dates when you need to communicate to your customer. Don't forget to leave time for the sales funnel effect – the days, weeks or months needed to turn your marketing messages into clients. Your media mix will be dependent on your research, as well as the season in which you are marketing in. For example, television is not as effective in summer when people are outdoors, and outdoor media may lose some visibility in winter.

Remember the rushed woman who had to make a decision at the beginning of this chapter? She and I spent four hours designing her marketing plan, which she took home and spent an additional two weeks perfecting. We met six months later to analyze the success of her marketing, which she is able to measure by increased participants at her seminars, hits on her website during the days of her media campaigns and a record

About Sharon:

Sharon Lancaster is a woman of creative ideas, inspiration and purpose who uses her own life experience to help others define what it is they need to move forward – from strategic marketing campaigns to setting up a web site to practicing reflexology for a more balanced life.

In her early career as a cosmetologist, where she became the co-owner and instructor of Winnipeg's first beautician school, Sharon learned the art of actively listening from behind the chair. Clients shared their life stories and personal triumphs and Sharon shared her ideas, training and business expertise.

From there, her passion for educating and public speaking grew along with her diverse career opportunities in health care, information technology and most recently, marketing and public relations.

As the owner of Slate Communications, Sharon is a consultant, facilitator and coach in the areas of marketing, sales training and technology solutions, providing services in strategic marketing, planning, branding and advertising to a wide range of companies. She has also served as a writer and editor for marketing newsletters, online learning projects, numerous web sites, and e-zine articles.

Sharon is a founding member of *Winnipeg's Wired Women* chapter, and is currently a Director for the *Advertising Association of Winnipeg* overseeing the education portfolio. She is a Director for the *Winnipeg Arts Council*, and an active member with the *Association of Internet Marketing & Sales* and the *Canadian Association of Professional Speakers*.

Sharon resides on the Red River in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she is continually inspired to pursue her passions - as a professional speaker, a marketing consultant and the mother of two grown daughters.

number of new clients. But the real win for Janet is that she now has fun marketing herself and is able to enthusiastically thank all media sales professionals for their calls and opportunities and accept their information for future analysis. She also tells them she may be interested in advertising in their media, and would gladly interview for an article on her product – but cannot buy space until next year – because now she has a marketing strategy and a media plan.