Five tips for raising your company’s profile

A Guest Article by Fiona Nicolson
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Start with a communication strategy and plan

Your company has the best product or service on the market. But if no one knows about it, or if you are not telling enough people about it, in the right places and in the right way, you may find it harder to achieve your goals.

So, if you are seeking to raise the profile of your business, where do you start?

Whether you work for or run a large corporate or a small to medium-sized business (SME), or if you are a sole trader, the basics of successful communications remain the same.

The first step is to have a strategy and plan. A key part of this process is to identify who you want to communicate with and what you want to say.

The next step is to say it, by “telling the truth well”, about your company, its news and achievements. The phrase was originally coined by advertising agency McCann Erickson, but it applies to any communications about your business.

Your plan of action could include a wide range of marketing and PR activities, depending on which are right for your company and its objectives.

I have listed five tried and tested communication methods for successfully raising the profile of your business, but there are many more.

1. Public relations

Editorial coverage in newspapers and magazines is often believed to have more “clout” than advertising. But there is a lot of competition for limited space, so you need to make sure that your message stands out. Be different, be newsworthy and be interesting. Your press releases will also stand more chance of success if they are targeted at the right publications, well written, supplied in the correct format, and relevant to the publications’ subject range.

It is exciting to gain a “splash” of press coverage, but it is all too easy to fall into the trap of thinking that this will be enough. If you do not keep going with your public relations campaign, you run the risk of losing the ground you have gained.

A reputable PR consultant will be able to help you continue to obtain news and features coverage. They have the experience, knowledge and contacts to source valuable PR opportunities and generate press coverage on an ongoing basis.

Beware of believing that press coverage will increase revenue, though,
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especially in the short term. Those kind of results will take time and will also depend on a number of other factors, including the effectiveness of your sales strategy and activity.

Press coverage will create and build awareness of your company. It will also enhance your reputation. But it needs to be used wisely. To get the most “bang for your buck”, obtaining the column inches is not enough. It is just the start.

2. Maximising the benefit of press coverage

Let your customers and contacts know that your business is in the press. This further enhances its reputation and credibility, making the job of selling a lot easier.

You can do it in person, for instance at client meetings, or while networking. Or you can tell clients, contacts and other “influencers” in newsletters, in mailshots and in the course of phone conversations.

You can also tell people online, through whichever channels you are active on. So, tweet out the news of your press coverage to your Twitter followers, share it on your Facebook page and announce it on LinkedIn.

And if you are investing time in these networks, your followers and connections will help you out by retweeting, sharing and “liking”, spreading your good news even further.

3. Twitter

While Twitter falls within the category of social media, it still requires the same care and attention that you apply to any other communications about your business.

The decision to use Twitter should be part of your communication strategy and plan, and whoever has the responsibility for communicating on Twitter should be doing so within these guidelines.

Keeping Twitter active can be time consuming, though, so it is important to commit to using it effectively. Tweet regularly (but not too often), tweet interesting content that your followers will appreciate, as well as information about your business – and, of course, be social. Retweet, engage with your followers, and the support you give and the interest you show will be returned.

Frivolous? A waste of time? Some may think so, but, used in the right way, it can raise your company’s profile and further enhance its reputation. Anything
that provides you with the opportunity to connect with customers and potential customers is well worth consideration.

**4. LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is not only for connecting with people you meet at networking events. You can further raise your company’s profile by joining relevant groups and starting or joining in discussions or offering advice, especially where you can demonstrate your expertise. Support your connections, too, by sharing and “liking” their news, or endorsing them – you may find that they return the compliment, all of which further spreads the word about your company.

**5. Networking**

Love it or loathe it, it provides the opportunity to communicate your brand to a room full of people. This does not mean handing out as many business cards as possible, but engaging in conversation, genuinely listening and showing an interest in others. That way they are more likely to pay attention to what you have to say about your business.

Do tell people about your company’s successes, though, and communicate your expertise, to build credibility and relationships. Try a few different networking groups to see which ones suit you best. Some people prefer informal gatherings, others like structure to their meetings. Some people like to network at breakfast time, others prefer to attend events at the end of the working day. So try a mix of meetings held on different days and times, and you will meet a wider spectrum of contacts.

Remember that relationship-building takes time, so be patient and keep going. Also bear in mind that the networking does not stop when the event finishes. That is when you swing into action with the follow-up, contacting everyone you met and keeping in touch. Again, the more interest you show in others, the more they will show in you.

**Conclusion**

Whichever methods you use to raise the profile of your business, there are a few key points to bear in mind.

The more time and effort applied to the right activities, in the right proportion, the more quickly results will be achieved.
It is also important to keep expectations realistic: while short bursts of activity will undoubtedly be helpful, profile-raising work needs to be ongoing and consistent to achieve your goals.

And while it is vital to be clear about what you want to say and to be active in promoting your company, your time is precious, so why not delegate to an expert and free up your time to do what you do best?

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If you would like more information on any of the points covered in this Guest Article, please contact TCii on _020 7099 2621_.

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