

CREATING BUZZ FOR YOUR NEW BIZ

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You've registered your business name and obtained necessary licenses and permits. You're ready to launch your new business baby into the world, but how exactly do you do so while getting the most bang out of your start-up budget? It is understandable for new business owners to become lost in the sea of promotion opportunities that exist. Promotion of one's new business is essential, and the right strategy will help put you on the fast track to commanding great buzz about your new biz.

We'll start with the basics: what's the difference between advertising, marketing and public relations (PR)? There is an old communications

publicity from media outlets by pitching story ideas in the form of press releases and/or press kits to targeted media outlets. PR firm services can extend to include everything from crisis communications management, writing bylined articles, publications creation, copywriting, events management and promotion, to community relations outreach planning and



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adage: advertising you pay for and PR you pray for. While not quite accurate, the idea is a decent general description. With advertising, you pay for ad space in a print or online publication, or you pay for a radio or television spot. PR is generally thought of in terms of media relations, in which you or a hired PR firm seeks out unpaid

implementation. A marketing campaign can generally be thought of as well-planned print publications and Web site marketing.

So which of the three options is most beneficial to a new business? The answer: a strategic combination of all three – advertising, PR and marketing. Advertising is a

good way to initially get your business name seen by the general public, and when you place your ad dollars in the right media outlets that reach your specific target audience, advertising can be successful. However, advertising alone can be costly, especially for new businesses. Also, while ads may get your business name out there, they may not necessarily generate customers. PR, on the other hand, not only helps gain publicity for your business, but it also gives the added benefit of implied third party endorsement by a publication. Think about what makes you try out a new restaurant or even a new dentist more: would you be swayed more by the full color ad in the newspaper, or would you be more enticed by a glowing review from the tough food critic or several glowing reviews from happy customers? That is the difference between the power of advertising and the power of PR.

Consistency is the key to ensuring the public remembers your business, and that's where a strong marketing campaign comes in. New business owners should invest in building a strong brand identity from the very beginning, and then carry this identity through on every single print or Web piece used for the business. Direct mail marketing and e-mail campaigns can be highly effective, provided you include concise copy combined with a design that enhances your identity and helps

communicate your message. Your marketing pieces should compliment any ads you are running at the same time, and consequently, your PR pitches should be timed to work with your ads and marketing pieces.

In order to figure out the right balance of advertising, PR and marketing that works for your biz, it's important to track the effectiveness of each campaign. You can do so by simple measures such as placing source codes on marketing pieces, tracking hits to your Web site from online press, creating coupon codes for products that are specific to certain e-newsletters, or even just asking customers how they heard about your business.

Once you get some buzz, remember that it's equally important to keep the buzz going. Allow your passion for your business to flow through your communications pieces, and keep at it. Eventually new customers will find you, and they'll tell their friends, who will tell their friends, and so on. Best of luck!

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