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Powerful Ways
to **Profit**
from
Free Publicity

by

Nancy S. Juetten

*M*edia-Savvy-to-Go
Vol. 1

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“There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.”

— *Oscar Wilde*

Is Your Company a Well-Kept Secret?

Many business owners and professionals want their names and expertise celebrated in the media. You are probably one of those people. Even though your products and services are clearly superior, you might be disappointed that your competitors are featured more than you are. And, you might believe that if your most important audiences knew more about your products and/or services, a boatload of new customers would beat a path to your door. The good news is that when you finish reading this booklet, you'll be better equipped to earn print ink and broadcast air for your own products and services.

My Story

I launched my public relations and marketing communications agency in February of 2001 when my son was just a toddler. Building on 15 years of corporate marketing and promotion experience, my goal was to do work I love from a home office and earn enough money to buy better groceries. Now, after following my own business building and public relations advice, my company has grown into a thriving corporation of three full-time employees, and we are all too busy to cook.

My firm has earned the reputation of a results-oriented public relations and marketing communications agency that delivers quality service in an engaging, authentic, and winning way.

It's Your Turn to Shine

You can earn a similar reputation as your own business takes flight by following my time-tested and proven tips. The *New York Times* once declared, “Good publicity lasts forever.” The time to begin capturing headlines for your growing business is now.

For information about quantity purchases and customization of this booklet or to discuss speaking, mentoring, and consulting services, use the contact method below that suits you best.



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“Helping winning companies tell their stories and build their brands.”

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“Practice the Rule of 5. This simply means that every day, do five specific things that will move your goal toward completion.”

— Jack Canfield

Cocreator of the Chicken Soup
for the Soul® series

What's Your Story?

1 Take the temperature to see if you are **sizzlin’ or fizzlin’**. Visit www.Google.com to discover the current “buzz” around your name and company. You've got some work to do if the only thing that comes up is the 5K race you ran three years ago.

2 Determine your **claim to fame**. Decide what you want to be known for, and craft an elevator speech. An elevator speech is a brief statement that clearly states who you serve, how you help, and why you, your products, and/or your services are superior.

3 Use a **well-tested, simple formula to write your elevator speech**. Mark LeBlanc, in *Growing Your Business!*, suggests a simple, conversational (not marketing-speak) answer to the “What do you do?” question:

I/We work with (target customer) _____
who wants (3-5 word outcome) _____
and (3-5 word outcome) _____

4 Brainstorm angles or “hooks” that showcase why your story is **timely, newsworthy, trend-worthy, local, and/or relevant**. Reporters love to cover trends and shine a light on local companies that demonstrate those trends. A great “hook” compels the reporter to take interest.

5 Have some fun, be creative in your approach, and give the reporters something they won't find elsewhere. Looking at what you have and who you are through those filters is bound to highlight your uniqueness.

6 Consider offering your story to a **single reporter as an exclusive**. Reporters want to get your information first. Offer the exclusive to the reporter you believe will do the best job with the story, while delivering the message to the right audience. You'll likely get more “ink and air” this way than if you send the same press release to every reporter that covers your industry or region.

7 Make it easy for reporters to tell your story accurately and in an interesting way.

Prepare a basic press kit that includes a fact sheet, a backgrounder, an FAQ document, your biography, speaker sheet, executive photograph, and Website address.

8 Create a press kit the easy way: Visit the online press rooms of your competitors or the companies you most admire. Review their press kits, and create similar materials for your company that tell your distinct and compelling story.

9 Put your best face forward. Since your image is on the line, sit for an executive photo that does the best that can be done with what you've got. Then, when reporters and editors see your photo, they won't quip that you have a face for radio. A high-quality photo increases the likelihood of including yours over those of lesser quality from other people.

10 Use a recent photo instead of one from five or ten years ago. An old photo can backfire when people meet you for the first time. You can prompt someone to wonder what else you might fib about if you are not truthful about your appearance.

11 Keep in mind that hair styles, hair colors, and fashion trends change as time marches on. Get a new head shot if your reflection in the mirror today doesn't match your photo.

12 Hire a professional photographer. Ask for quality digital JPEG or GIF images of at least 300 dots per inch (DPI).

13 Label your photo. Include your first and last name, company name, and the date to ensure you are properly identified in media coverage. The investment of time and money is modest. The end result puts your best face forward so folks beyond your mother will notice.

Aim Before You Fire Away

14 Know thy media outlets. Read and listen to reporters who write about your industry and have the influence and credibility to spread your story far and wide. Paying attention to the people who report the news ultimately helps you craft winning story pitches and press releases that will compel them to pay attention to you or your story.

15 Choose the media avenues that are the best match for your message. This includes evaluating the audience, reach, editorial tone, and image of each media outlet.

16 Prioritize your media outlets for your press release. Consider which publications would be the biggest "win" for your message. A media placement that reaches 500,000 subscribers with a genuine need for your product or service packs a more powerful punch than a media placement in a little known publication with far fewer and less qualified subscribers.

17 Study the online media kits for target publications. Here you can read about each publication's target audience and its circulation. You can also look at editorial calendars to learn what each publication is planning to write about in the months to come and determine how your own expertise can factor into that coverage.

18 Visit www.medialistsonline.com to quickly generate basic media contact lists. Going through the selection process on this site is also an excellent exercise in refining who you want to reach and how you want to reach them.

Prepare and Share your Message

19 Write press releases. A press release is typically a one-page document covering “who, what, why, when, how, and where” information in a journalistic style, conveying the facts in the order of highest importance. Lead with your “hook” to make clear why reporters should care about your news and why it matters. Always list a contact person and the best way to reach him by phone or email.

20 Think about whether your news warrants a press release. Visit www.publicityhound.com for 89 reasons to issue a press release.

21 Email your press releases to the reporters who cover your industry. You'll know just the right people with whom to connect since you are now making a practice of reading and watching the reporters who cover your business. Reporter email addresses typically follow each story, and they are also available online. That makes it easy to get in touch.

22 Write a pitch letter. A pitch letter offers a few provocative, thoughtful, and engaging paragraphs that share your timely, relevant, and newsworthy story idea and why you or your company would be a quality source for editorial commentary or perspective. A pitch letter differs from a press release in that it is more conversational in tone and it is often personalized to the specific interests of the reporter with whom you are corresponding.

23 Get the names right. Address reporters by their name, and spell each name correctly.

24 Send information in the context of today's news. Be prepared to offer timely access to the experts, deal makers, or decision makers to lend context and commentary to your current news.

25 Believe in the power of cyberspace and the U.S. mail. Calling reporters to ask if they received your press release doesn't serve you or your story in the least. Those calls annoy and

distract deadline-driven reporters and offer no added value. If you insist on telephone follow up, offer late breaking news that makes your press release even more compelling and worth writing about.

26 Trust the reporter to decide about your news. The reporter will call or email you to follow up if your facts capture his interest to the point at which he wants to dig in and write a deeper story. A sent press release, story pitch, or article is never a guarantee for coverage. It is always the reporter's option to decide what is or isn't news.

27 Remember that most quality media outlets keep advertising and editorial departments separate. Asking a writer or editor to make a story assignment because your company buys a lot of advertising isn't a good move and will likely send your idea to the round file in record time.

28 Realize that timing is everything. Anything is possible if it is a slow news day. However, news of lesser magnitude is likely to fall to the round file if today's news is focused on a calamity, the results of a widely contested election, or the death of a world leader.

29 Decide if visuals lend impact to your story. If so, consider what visuals you can offer. Photos can be very persuasive in compelling TV and print editors to tell your story. Best of all, visuals can increase the attention viewers pay to your story by as much as 30%.

30 Go beyond the notion that if it bleeds it leads. It is not necessarily so. Sometimes, TV and print assignment desk editors crave visuals on the lighter side of the news. Capturing the magic of the downtown holiday lights or the last minute Easter rush at the local chocolate shop can provide timely, relevant, refreshing, and visual news. These kinds of stories can serve as the close to any local news broadcast or grace the cover of your local newspaper.

31 Take heart. At the end of the day, a good story will always stand on its own merit.

Get Quoted in the Media

32 **Share your biography with reporters who write about your industry.** Summarize the three topics about which you can comment with impact, credibility, and insight, along with your qualifications. This positions you as an expert who can help them inform their readers or viewers.

33 **Impress the reporter.** Mention your prestigious college degrees, decades of business advisory experience, and important brand name companies on your client list. Include your track record of great results in a manner that makes editors and readers want to benefit from your sage wisdom and counsel.

Become a Published Author Fast!

34 **Write how-to articles in local and trade press.** How-to articles offer news the reader can use to run a better business or live a better life as a result of your expertise. They offer information in a factual, credible, engaging, yet non-promotional manner. How-to articles offer you “published author” status that enhances your credibility and your lead generation efforts.

35 **Identify timely, relevant, newsworthy, or trend-worthy article topics.** Editors and readers want information that is meaningful to them today. Think about the bigger trends and how your story fits in. Then, present your ideas from that standpoint. Trend-spotting gets easier the more you do it.

36 **Target the right publications for your article pitch.** If you and your ideal customers read the publication and the editorial content is a fit for your expertise, the publication is likely a good match for your message.

37 **Source and study relevant editorial calendars for article placement opportunities.** Editorial calendars indicate the topics the publication plans to cover in the months ahead. Consider these plans and how your story can factor

into these plans. Find editorial calendars in the online media kit sections of the publications that are highest on your priority list. You can also call each publication and ask.

38 **Select the names and contact information for the appropriate editors for each publication just as you would when issuing a press release.** Using the person's exact name increases the odds of getting their attention much more than addressing your submission to “Editor.”

39 **Be a heat-seeking missile for pain.** When you're thinking of potential article topics, brainstorm provocative titles that showcase your expertise and solve problems readers are eager to solve.

40 **Lead with negative headlines for best results.** “The Seven Deadly Cash Management Sins Small Business Owners Make and Strategies to Avoid Them” is more compelling than “Seven Winning Cash Management Strategies.”

41 **Be succinct and compelling.** Grab editors' attention with a provocative article title and a credibility-enhancing, yet brief biography that summarizes your qualifications. A great test for this is to imagine yourself on the receiving end of what you are sending.

42 **Beware of “blah, blah, blah” narrative.** Keep the language crisp, meaningful, and void of jargon. Be clear how the information will inform or serve the readers or viewers.

43 **Email targeted and customized article pitches to selected editors, just as you would a press release.** Start with your top priority publication first.

44 **Follow up by phone within one week to ask for an assignment.** For example, call the reporter and say something like: “I notice you've got a marketing/media special section coming up on July 15. I am calling today to find out if an article from the chief marketing officer of XYZ company about the latest trends in buzz marketing and what they mean to local businesses would be a fit for your editorial plans.”

45 Secure editor commitment. If the editor accepts your article idea, confirm the deadline and word-count specifications and agree to a suggested date of publication for your submission. These requests demonstrate professionalism.

46 Keep pitching until you “get to yes.” If the editor at your top priority publication declines your idea, customize it to appeal to the editor for the next publication on your priority list. Continue this process until you secure an editor's acceptance of your idea.

47 Research the Internet and other credible sources for relevant information and quotes to support the article. Having the additional information strengthens your position as an expert.

48 Write the article. Do it all in one sitting or pieces at a time, whichever way works best for you.

49 Email your finished narrative to the editor. Match the agreed word count, on or before the deadline, and include a quality executive headshot. Doing this elevates you to the status of “a joy to work with” in the editor's eyes.

50 Make it easy for readers to get in touch with you. Be sure to include your name, phone number, email address, and Website address at the end of your article.

51 Ask the editor for a regular column, once you've written and placed a few quality articles. Craft five to ten short, snappy article ideas that demonstrate your ability to sustain a quality column that serves the readers well over time. Ask for a commitment.

52 Monitor the media for placements and the response you enjoy as a result of your coverage. Watch as Website visits, phone calls, and email inquiries escalate.

53 Order professional article reprints from the publication. Call the circulation department to make your request. As an alternative, engage a graphic designer to create a print-on-demand (PDF) file that is branded to your company. Be sure you have the publication's permission to duplicate the article.

54 Post the file in your online press room. This information merchandises your expertise forever. It also allows other editors and media producers to review your coverage at their 24/7 convenience.

55 Write a keep-in-touch letter or email to accompany your online story link. Share it with your prospects and referral sources to encourage new business conversations.

56 Perpetuate the process. Keep pitching good article ideas. This is an ideal way to secure an ongoing pattern of quality media placements in targeted publications over time. Editors will look forward to hearing from you as you demonstrate what a quality source you are for ideas that serve their readers and how well you deliver quality narrative on time and word count.

Interview Training Tips

57 Be available for interviews as much as possible. Yes, there are times when it just doesn't work into your schedule. Make those the rare exceptions so the media keeps calling you.

58 Decide on your three key points. Work these into your answers. You cannot be sure your key points will make the article when you state your messages only once.

59 Preparation pays off. Pull together the backup data you might need before the interview so you can deliver your comments in a professional, polished manner.

60 Be yourself. Speak with ease, as if you are chatting with a friend in your living room. This makes it possible for you to connect with the reporter and the broader audience for your story. When in doubt, engage a media skills trainer to help you practice before your interview while using a tape recorder or video camera. Hearing and seeing how you come across in a practice interview can help you identify ways to make sure you perform at your best when it really counts.

61 Stop, think, and speak. Be sure you understand what the reporter is asking before you begin to answer.

62 **Speak for yourself.** If the reporter says, “Isn’t this really...,” beware. He is making a statement he hopes you will agree to.

63 **Treat the reporter like a customer.** Respect comes back to you, no matter the outcome of the interaction.

64 **Be friendly and engaging, rather than deferential or defensive.** Remember to smile, even if you’re doing a radio interview. Monitor your own facial expressions, body language, and gestures.

65 **Stay focused.** Pause often. Make your point and stop.

66 **Take time to educate the reporter about your company or agency if necessary.** It gives your information more exposure and helps guide the reporter.

67 **Use complete names or words instead of acronyms.** Speak plain English instead of jargon. Doing both invites the reader or listener in to what you are saying instead of excluding them from what could seem like a secret or private “in” group.

68 **Be quotable.** Think in terms of attention-getting headlines and lead paragraphs when you are speaking.

69 **Speak in sound bites.** These are essential talking points that are 10-20 seconds in length. Here are a few examples:

“Investing should be like watching paint dry.

*If you’re getting an adrenaline rush,
you’re doing something wrong.”*

Michael Dukes, Financial Advisor

“A computer on every desk.”

Microsoft Founder Bill Gates.

“Read my lips. No new taxes.”

President George Bush

70 **Tell the truth.** Avoid the words “no comment.” There are a number of ways to address a tough question short of raising that red flag.

71 **Realize there is no such thing as “off the record.”** Everything and anything you say is on the record the moment it comes from you.

72 **Stick to your own story, and do it without defaming anyone.** Your own truth is the easiest thing to remember. Unkind words can never be retrieved once they are shared with someone else.

73 **Come clean when you don’t know the answer.** Ask about the deadline, get a telephone number, and call the reporter with the correct information before the deadline.

74 **Avoid the dreaded LAQ.** LAQ stands for “lame ass quote.” “I’m just so excited to bring my product to market,” “We’re pleased to have the opportunity to play the game,” and “I’m just happy to help the ball club” are LAQ examples. These statements might work for the movies, but they don’t offer much value to inform readers, listeners, or viewers.

75 **Ask the reporter if he has all the information he needs.** Restate your three key points as the interview winds down so those messages are remembered most.

76 **Mind your manners.** Send the reporter a note of thanks after the story runs. That way, you’ll be the first person the reporter calls when next reporting on your industry.

77 **Keep gifts at a reasonable value.** It’s okay to send a reporter a small gift or premium item as a thank you. Keep in mind that it is a breach of journalistic ethics for reporters to accept gifts valued at more than \$20.

Capture More Ink

78 Write a letter to the editor of your local business journal or daily newspaper.

Comment on something related to your business, and sign it with your company name.

79 Email notices about new hires and promotions to the “people on the move” sections of the local and trade media. These are simple press releases announcing the name, company name, and position of the featured executive. Include a high-quality, digital image of each featured executive. Most newspapers publish the email addresses of the people responsible for these sections of the newspaper. That makes it easy to get in touch.

80 Email news of your company's upcoming events to the “meeting notice” or “business calendar” sections of the local and trade media. These state the “what, where, when, why, and how” in a concise manner. Each publication has its own publishing cycle and deadline requirements. Investigate and honor those requirements.

Spread Your Good News

81 Keep your newspaper clip out of the recycling bin. Use it to grow your credibility and impact in the marketplace. Send a notice of your media coverage to clients, prospects, referral partners, and friends of your firm. This keeps you in touch with your network and gives you the most value from the credibility that editorial coverage provides. Keep a notebook that archives all of your press coverage for future reference.

82 Include the online article link in your ezine. An ezine is an electronic newsletter that offers news your readers (clients, prospects, or referral sources) can use to run a better business or live a better life as a result of your expertise. It's an easy way get the word out to an audience that already engages with your company and its news.

83 Frame the story for your lobby, retail window, building lobby, or executive conference room. People love reading about the company while they wait for an appointment, consider coming into the store, or wait for meetings to start.

84 Use the article as a brochure. You can distribute it to prospective clients and other interested parties. The article acts as a credible endorsement for your products and services. As a published author, you enjoy credibility that far exceeds the value that expensive and highly designed brochures provide.

85 Enclose a copy of the story with your direct mail. One more piece of relevant paper is worth any additional postage or duplication cost.

86 Post the coverage on your Website. Put it into your online press room and/or on your home page, depending on the importance of the coverage.

87 Ask recipients to spread the news and invite their quality referrals. Sometimes people need guidance about what you want them to do, no matter how obvious it may seem to you.

88 Fuel media momentum. One good media placement can lead to another. One day, your story is told within the pages of the local business journal. The next, it can land on the pages of *USA Today*. Each media placement lends additional credibility to your story while reaching a new audience of potential customers and decision influencers.

89 Email your articles to radio talk show producers. Listen to the shows that are the right format and fit for your story. Identify the right producer by visiting the station's Website or calling to ask for the producer who covers stories like yours. Then, you can demonstrate to the right people why your expertise can offer value for the listeners. Ask for a radio interview in that email.

90 Send your articles to program directors at clubs, associations, and professional organizations. Ask for speaking engagements to bring your message to an even wider audience of potential clients.

91 Bring article reprints to serve as hand-outs when you speak. Be sure you have permission from the publication to duplicate the article.

92 Post your articles to Websites such as www.articleteller.com, www.ezinearticles.com, and www.ideamarketers.com. Ezine publishers from coast to coast and worldwide visit these sites daily to access quality content to inform their readers. Your articles help fan the flames of your expertise among their audiences and attract quality prospects to your Internet front door. They also help your name come up more readily in the search engines.

93 Show your passion for your work with every move you make. Passion is magnetic. It is the most valuable tool to attract quality clients, media attention, and other rewards to your growing, successful business.

Get Into Action Today

94 Be prepared instead of overwhelmed. Choose the five tips that appeal most to your strengths so you can tell your story, build your brand, and grow your business.

95 Experience the power and impact of results that flow from your efforts. You worked for those results, and you get to enjoy them.

96 Add new tactics to the mix each month. This is important to keep your business and its “buzz” growing. Remember, inactivity won't grow your business. Focused activity is the answer.

97 Be consistent and disciplined in your media relations efforts. This will generate an ongoing pattern of favorable media coverage. Good press can establish you as an expert in your

field. It can also invite new business conversations with prospects and fuel purchases of your products or services.

What are you waiting for?

Get into action today and apply these 97 powerful ways to profit from free publicity.

Did you know that this is the first of two "Media-Savvy-to-Go" booklets that offer valuable, proven, and powerful ways to profit from free publicity? Vol. 2 shares 50 more ways to employ ezines, award contests, seminars, and "Jumbo Shrimp Marketing" into your media relations mix to achieve extraordinary results. Order it today at the online store at www.nsjmktg.com.

Share your media relations triumphs with Nancy today at nancy@nsjmktg.com



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Useful Resources

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Engage Nancy S. Juetten for mentoring, consulting, or speaking services. Email nancy@nsjmktg.com for the current menu of services and value.

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www.i-newsrelease.net

www.medialistsonline.com

www.PRweb.com

www.prnewswire.com

Sites That Welcome Article Submissions

www.articleteller.com

www.ezinearticles.com

www.ideamarketers.com

Audio Conference Resources

www.audiostrategies.com

www.freeaudioconference.com

Sites to Help You Get Known, Sell More Products/Services, and Attract More Clients Now

www.actionplanmarketing.com

www.getknownnow.com

www.sitesell.com

www.newclientmarketing.com

www.tipsbooklets.com

Two Proven Ezine Resources to Help Launch Yours

www.constantcontact.com

www.glimpseinteractive.com

10 Tips to Promote Your Business with This Booklet

It can even be customized especially for you.

- 1** Use this booklet as a “thank you” for a sales appointment or as a gift to compel new members to join your organization.
- 2** Mail it to your members or prospects to stay in touch.
- 3** Offer it free with any purchase during a specific time, with a certain purchase amount, or when opening a new account or initiating a new membership.
- 4** Distribute this booklet to prospects at trade shows.
- 5** Give it as an incentive for completing a questionnaire or survey.
- 6** Include it as a “thank you” gift when mailing your invoices.
- 7** Package it as a value-added bonus with a product or service you sell.
- 8** Deliver a copy to the hands of the first “X” number of people who enter a drawing, register for your next seminar/workshop, or visit your store.
- 9** Provide copies of this booklet to people and organizations that can refer business to you.
- 10** Send it to your clients at year-end, thanking them for their business.

What are you waiting for?