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COMMUNICATOR

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Celebrating OUR DIVERSITY

By Ken Heffernan

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We are all in the same boat in a very troubled sea and we owe each other a terrible loyalty!

The diversity of our CCI Australia membership is much of the strength of all we do and all we are. We share diversity of denominations, diversity of Biblical interpretation, diversity of locations, diversity of properties, diversity of facilities, diversity of operations, diversity of structure, diversity of management, diversity of culture, diversity of programs, diversity of hospitality and diversity of individuals.

While it is true, our diversity is a vital ingredient to the outstanding success of CCI Australia, it can create a basis for conflict within the membership.

An effective association is not one that necessarily avoids conflict at any cost but has effective ways of managing conflict.

The free expression of our diversity should and must be encouraged. In fact too much uniformity can lead any group to a level of conformity that is dysfunctional.

At the same time, diversity should never be allowed to breed disunity. This can be avoided as long as:-

- Every one of us, each individual member is confident in our shared vision to which we are all committed.
- Each member has a genuine respect and concern for each other member.
- We do not judge each other, majoring on differences with which we may not agree.

Our effectiveness as an Association is in our corporate and individual language of "us" and "ours" not "me" and "mine".

I am passionate about CCI Australia. I love the diversity of CCI Australia and delight in the length and breadth of our denominational representation.

Yet, through all the diversity I am amazed at our oneness in and through Christ. You see it is all about Jesus and all the rest is just ... all the rest!

Ken Heffernan
PRESIDENT





By Julia-Isabel Davenport, MBA

HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR PUBLICITY

Attracting attention to your camp is effectively done through public relations. Businesses can build credibility and visibility through a consistent publicity plan, and create goodwill within their community. This is your opportunity to learn what is newsworthy about your business, how to write a media release, and create a media list. With these tools you can maximise your publicity to set yourself apart.

Attracting attention to your camp is probably one of your chief concerns. How do you stand out? Creating top of mind awareness is essential to bringing in customers and a publicity plan holds the key to creating that awareness. With so many marketing options available, sometimes the most affordable option of public relations is overlooked. Public relations is the marketing function that creates publicity and goodwill within the community.

The best public relations campaign is done by educating the media about your business on a consistent monthly basis. When done effectively, it increases your credibility and visibility to attract new clients and you become a source for the media. For example, when they are writing a story about leadership programs for teens they will contact you. So what is the difference between publicity and advertising? Publicity is free and advertising is paid placement. Publicity builds more credibility than advertising. An article written about a business increases the importance of that business in the eye of the reader, as opposed to an ad. Because publicity is

a community service provided by news media free of charge to businesses, you are not guaranteed placement. However, using publicity generates credibility while saving you thousands of dollars in advertising costs.

To create an effective public relations campaign you need to know what is newsworthy about your business. The next step is transferring that information into a media release and then delivering it to the appropriate media contacts in time for their publication deadlines.

There are eleven newsworthy angles that your business can benefit from. Each of these will make valuable contributions to your publicity plan to create monthly publicity opportunities. They are:

- Launching new products or services
- Offering a solution to a current hot topic
- Staff promotions or expanding your staff
- Community outreach
- A grand opening, moving or closing
- Celebrating your business' anniversary

- Receiving a new contract or customer
- Reaching a milestone, such as the 10,000th customer served
- Public speaking about creative ways to recognize high performers
- Serving in leadership capacities for non-profits
- Giving or receiving an award

Launching a new product or service is a great way to introduce your business to the community. For example, if you add an outdoor education program, write a release announcing the benefit to potential clients. It doesn't matter if the camp down the street has a similar program, be smart and educate the media about your business. Now, if you do have the only outdoor education program in your area, be sure to point that out. Include a photo of the program or facility you want to promote.

Offering a solution to a current hot topic is as simple as promoting your camp for Stress Awareness Month, Safe Boating Week, Special Recreation for the Disabled Day, or Therapeutic Recreation Week. Whenever

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there is a camp-related occasion make them aware of how your camp can meet their needs.

Be sure to write a media release when you have added to your staff. Include a head shot photo to accompany the release. This type of release is considered an "evergreen story" meaning since it is not tied to a specific date for an event it might take several weeks before they print it.

Community outreach is fundamental to a good public relations campaign, as it is the only publicity opportunity that you have some control over when it happens. Activities can range from holding a drive to collect food, clothing, etc for a local charity, or donating a portion of proceeds to a charity.

A grand opening, moving or closing is appropriate for a media release. If you did not have a grand opening, why not have one? If you have been in your campgrounds for a while, but have upgraded the facilities think about a grand reopening.

Your camp anniversary is one media release you can count on every year. Inform the media and your community that you are still in business and how long you have been part of the community. Longevity is a great credibility builder. With a society on the move there will be new people and businesses in your community that won't know how long you have been there.

Receiving a new contract or customer from a non-profit, government entity or another business, is a great way to toot your horn. It elevates your value because these businesses are doing business with you.

Reaching a milestone, such as the 1,000th group booked, creates images of stability, longevity, quality, and customer satisfaction. In other words, a place I would want to do business with!

Public speaking about creative ways to recognize high performers is a great platform for you. Contact your local Rotary groups, business networking groups, chambers of commerce and offer a 20 – 30 minute presentation that would educate their members of the various methods of recognition. Keep in mind it is not a commercial about the camp, but an educational

opportunity to share the benefits of going on retreats and what the options are.

Serving in leadership capacities for non-profits is another way to generate publicity for your business, even if the leadership role has nothing to do with your business. If you are elected, nominated or volunteered to serve for any non-profit be sure to let the community know and mention that you are the manager of Camp ABC.

Awards are a wonderful way to let the community share in your successes, whether you are giving or receiving an award, especially if you make the award! Awards can be given to celebrate employee of the year, vendor of the year, employee volunteer of the year, etc. Be sure to include a photo of the award presentation.

Community outreach is fundamental to a good public relations campaign,

Once you have identified newsworthy angles about your business it is time to focus on the actual writing of the release. When writing the media release the idea is to concisely communicate the message in preferably one page and not more than two pages. By providing the highlights the goal is to capture the editor's interest. If they have space they can do a feature story with a follow up in-depth interview, but typically they use exactly what you send them. Use your best grammar while avoiding industry jargon or undefined abbreviations.

A release usually comprises three paragraphs. The first paragraph summarizes the release stating the who, what, where, when, why and how in a flowing paragraph. The second paragraph is your quote relating to the subject of the release. The third is the closing paragraph that identifies your uniqueness. It should always include contact information, whether you give a website, email or phone. Format the release with double-spacing and using a readable font such as Times New Roman 12.

Now for the next question - who do you send it to? If you are having an event to give back to the community, send it to the community editor. If it is announcing your business anniversary, send it to the business and the community editor. The key is to send it to as many reporters and editors that would be interested, even at the same publication.

The media list is your tool for distributing your media releases. Creating a list is easily done. Begin with publications you receive at your home or office by identifying the correct contact person. Usually email is the most efficient method to send the release. Visit the local library to select publications you may not receive and refer to the Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media for an extensive listing of every media contact in the world. When creating your list be sure to only select publications that would be interested in some angle of your story. Add new contacts as you see new publications, establish new angles or hear of personnel changes. Be sure to identify if the publication is daily, weekly or monthly.

Respond immediately if the media calls for clarification. They are doing you a huge favour, giving you hundreds if not thousands of dollars of free press. Be easy to work with so that you can continue to create a positive impression in their mind.

In summary, to help distinguish you from your competition add public relations to your marketing efforts. Identify what is newsworthy about your business and create a publicity plan. Begin writing and distributing the releases to your media list. Be persistent with a goal of one new release per month. Enjoy the increased visibility and goodwill your business will receive by maximising your publicity!

Small Business Public Relations Coach Julia Isabel Davenport, MBA is the author of "How to Maximize Your Publicity" and "Biblical Affirmations for a Successful Life", publisher of the "2007 Publicity Planner", the owner of Maximize Your Publicity LLC, and speaker to international audiences. For more information visit www.MaximizeYourPublicity.com or email Julia-Isabel@MaximizeYourPublicity.com.