

Publicity Pointers

by Julia-Isabel Davenport

Publicity is something that every business owner wants. Free advertising in the local paper or a national magazine sets the business apart from their competition and it builds credibility and visibility for the company. Publicity is free advertising. That's right, free. The publications and media channels pass along information about businesses every day and without charge to the business.

So how do you get a piece of that action? Understanding what the media is looking for is the first step. They are looking for newsworthy information rather than advertising material. Well, what is the difference? Advertising announces a sale, offers a coupon, touts the product is the best and is full of flowery adjectives. Newsworthy information announces the release of a new product or service, the anniversary of a business, hiring or promotion of employees, professional accomplishments like certification, or a community outreach effort.

Understanding what is newsworthy about your business is just the first hurdle. I am frequently asked "don't the papers have to publish my

release?" Actually, they don't. They are doing it as a service and will do so if they think it will benefit their readers. If you absolutely must have something in print then pay for the guaranteed placement of an ad. But, that doesn't lend itself to the same level of credibility as an article.

Another point to discuss is advertorials. Advertorials are articles that require payment for placement. Usually they are noted as being an advertorial to let the reader understand the publication did not provide the information. By being identified as such it reduces credibility and puts it on the same level as an ad. Another twist is for the paper to say, I won't print your story unless you take out an ad. Skip it and move to the next publication.



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A New Opportunity for Landscape Professionals to Grow Your Business.

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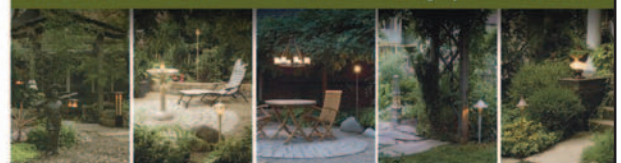


Garden Collections™

by KICHLER LANDSCAPE LIGHTING



Zen Garden St. Croix Oak Trail Ainsley Square Gate House



Publicity

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So what is the best strategy to increase your chances of getting the media release printed? Have something newsworthy to announce, craft a clever title to catch the editor's attention, write a concise release on no more than two pages, send it to the right person before their deadline and don't be a pest calling them every day to see if they got it. Do be persistent in your education of the media about what you do by providing regular updates on the newsworthy aspects of your business. Plan your year in advance to know what you can publicize each month. Be phenomenally responsive to the media if they call for questions or follow up.

Julia-Isabel Davenport, MBA, is the owner of Maximize Your Publicity. Maximize Your Publicity has helped associations and businesses tell their story for more than 12 years in the valley, and around the world. Davenport is the publisher of the "2006 Publicity Planner," creator of the Community Megastar Award and author of "Effective Ways to Attract and Receive Publicity." Maximize Your Publicity helps you achieve your business goals through personalized monthly action plans and follow up, create community outreach opportunities, plan marketing strategies and writes and distributes press releases to local, national and international markets. In 2006, Davenport launched "Business Strategy Lunches" for business owners looking for effective tools to improve their businesses.

For more information on maximizing your publicity visit www.MaximizeYourPublicity.com or call 623-572-8201. ■

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