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Get Free Publicity by Avoiding These Rookie Mistakes

Most business owners, entrepreneurs, authors, musical artists and others who want to get free publicity shoot themselves in the foot when dealing with the media and end up not getting the publicity they might otherwise have had. Here are some mistakes to avoid:

Not coordinating new and traditional media campaigns. Many people believe that publicity programs should be one or the other, or that traditional media is dead. Both of them are very effective ways to get free publicity.

Trying to oversell on social media. You can use them to sell, but your primary focus should be on creating relationships, which can often lead to business profits.

A poorly written press release. The press release should read like a newspaper's story, even if it is for broadcast media. It should be in the inverted pyramid style. Start with the most important point and proceed to the least important point. It should be written in the 3rd person--she,he -- not you, I. It should be somewhere between 400 - 600 words.

A weak press release headline. This is the most important part of the release. It should quickly catch the journalist's attention and convey the main point of the story.

Advertising. The press release should read like news, not a thinly disguised advertisement. Avoid hype and industry jargon.

Talking too long. Journalists are very busy. When you call them on the phone, be polite but get to the main point fast.

Being late. Many people trying to get free publicity pitch stories without giving reporters and editors enough advance notice. If you have a scheduled event, send your pitch at least two weeks ahead of time for newspapers and broadcast outlets. Most magazines have a lead time of several months to a year.

Being unavailable on deadline day. Reporters are always on deadline. Make sure that you are available when they are on a deadline for the story they are doing about you. They will often have additional questions to ask you. If you are not around for them to talk with you, they might kill the story. So be available if you want to get free publicity.

Danek S. Kaus is an experienced business journalist and publicist. He is the author of "You Can Be Famous! Insider Secrets to Getting Free Publicity." [Get Free Publicity Tips](#) at his website and learn how [You Can Be Interviewed on Radio Talk Shows](#)

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