

Business Focus: PR

5 Steps to Building Lasting Media Relationships

Like any relationship, the quality and value will be determined by the time and effort you put in! All too often, business and practitioners fall into the trap of only connecting with media when they want something... Just think - how would you react to someone doing this to you? So – here are five easy steps to building good quality, lasting media relationships that will deliver value for you and your business for years to come.

STEP 1: Do Your Homework

It might sound obvious, but if you don't already have a little black book of media contacts, it's time you started building one. Start 'collecting' names that crop up through your own media consumption: be they trade journalists, consumer beauty writers or bloggers, newspaper commentators, or radio presenters. Don't always be lured in by the big national titles – everyone wants to be in Vogue or the Daily Mail but the success rate is alarmingly low – just think about who you're trying to attract into your clinic and where THEY get their information from. This is your shortcut to finding good media contacts who already have an established trust and rapport with your ideal patients. Google the contact information of all potential connections and build a log, complete with a comments column for you to regularly log your interactions.

STEP 2: Set the Scene

Let's assume for the moment that you're focusing your outreach efforts on local journalists. Tell them what you find interesting about their writing and the stories they cover – reference examples from their work to build their trust in you and help make more of an impression. If you are a new clinic, take the opportunity to introduce yourself and 'set the scene' for your business: tell them who you are, what you stand for and what you offer the local community in a short, pithy 'elevator pitch'. The 'new clinic' factor and personal approach may well be enough to pique the journalists' interest and result in a news item! For established clinics, highlight your existing standing in the community, your successes, and your awards. You can reach out by phone, email, social media – the opportunities are plentiful!

STEP 3: Offer Value

Take the opportunity to build and 'piggy back' on relevant stories from your key contacts. Did they get something slightly wrong? Politely offer a correction to help their audiences understand better. Did you agree – or disagree- with something they are saying relating to aesthetics, beauty, trends, or safety? Offer your expert opinion: journalists are always looking for those willing to put their heads above the parapet and be counted. Now, at this stage, is when you can also seed in your own news

and features for consideration – having built a foundation of credibility. The more you offer value, the more your media contacts will trust and value your inputs.

STEP 4: Make Time for Face Time

These days it is all too easy to hide behind emails or the phone – once in a while, make the effort to arrange a meeting in person. Offer to take the journalist out for a coffee so you can hear more about what they're writing about at the moment, or how you might be able to contribute to topics they are pencilled in. Never underestimate the power of a face-to-face meeting – you will be more memorable and likely to stick in a journalists' mind. A 'watch out' – don't expect to short-cut the relationship process by skipping steps 1-3, splurging on a nice one-off media lunch or dinner and then expecting blanket coverage. Not only will this damage your credibility, it will be a wasted investment which may work once, but is unlikely to do so again. This is a marathon, not a sprint!

STEP 5: Say Thank You or Well Done!

We all crave recognition, so if your contact writes up your story, or includes a quote from you – say thank you! Ideally, highlight the article (and your thanks) on all your social media platforms so they get a boost of recognition from your followers. When it's not all about you, keep the flame alive by saying positively acknowledging their other articles which resonated for one reason or another. Connecting little and often is the key to success here – so good luck and get cracking!

Next time: Becoming a media spokesperson



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