

Creating a Great Press Kit

By way of an extension to last month's "10 Simple Public Relations Tactics" I have elected to explore this month the elements that come together to create a great press kit. The press kit is a necessary tool for any sustained PR effort, and should be developed by any company that hopes to have its story told by the media. The kit is essentially comprised of a variety of materials that share information about the company, the leadership, the products and the history. The information needs to provide a journalist seeking to write a comprehensive piece on your company with all the information he or she might need.

To create a great press kit you need to assemble 6 primary components that, together, will tell your story in a manner that raises interest, defines the newsworthiness, and create the position of the company. By this I mean that if, for example, you want your company portrayed as a pioneering, entrepreneurial firm, you will need to frame your information toward this conclusion by providing information that demonstrates and reinforces this perception. Therefore, the quality of your information and its tone are critically important to the success of the kit.

The components to a great press kit are:

1. A Background Description

A brief background piece describing the company and its products (or services), as well as an explanation of the benefits they offer, the customers it sells to, and the market within which it competes. This description needs to demonstrate why the company is newsworthy.

2. A Fact Sheet

A one pager with bullet points providing the central facts about the company, including address, year founded, number of employees, capital raised, status (public or private), and any other essential information. You should also include a brief description of your product or service.

3. Biographies

You will need to include brief biographies of the company's founders, leaders, main advisors, and Board of Directors. Do not include resumes or multiple pages on each person. Brief in this instance means a paragraph per person that highlights the individual's past achievements and what expertise they bring to the company.

4. Press Releases

Include all the past press releases you have released (within the 3 months). You can also include press releases from the past year as long as they mark major milestones. They not only tell the story of the company and communicate the latest news, they also demonstrate that the company is actively seeking press coverage and deems itself newsworthy.

5. Articles

Include no more than 4 press clippings from coverage you have received. This demonstrates that other media professionals have deemed the coverage you have been seeking newsworthy. Be aware though that if you include too many it will backfire on you both because some journalists may think you have been given enough exposure, and some may see your story as one that has already been told. You need to maintain your position as being newsworthy and as ironic as it may sound, that means not showing that too many others (but only some) have seen you as newsworthy.

6. Visuals

Nothing brings your company to life better than graphics or photographs. The benefits you so aptly described in your description will come to life with some graphics. Make sure they are simple to understand. Also, if you want them reproduced and included in an article, make sure they are of a high resolution.

Your press kit should be with you at all times and you should develop a series of tactics that allow you to distribute the press kit to targeted journalists in a manner that will encourage a positive acceptance.

Creating press coverage will allow your company to reap incredible benefits as not only your exposure increases, but so too does your credibility (which is not true, for example, with advertising). The need for positive PR is becoming more urgent as advertising is falling under great suspicion by consumers – corporate and private alike. The information we gather from our news sources still evokes a great deal of confidence. That is the type of exposure companies need to strive for. A good press kit is one of the crucial tools needed to reach that goal.