

Developing a Killer Press Kit

There has been a lot of talk lately about the rise of public relations as an alternative to advertising because it is both less expensive and (perhaps) more effective (because it is perceived as a third party endorsement and not self-generated praise). Tudog believes that public relations can be an effective marketing tactic, but does not think it is effective as stand-alone or lone action. Rather, Tudog believes PR is most effective when the exposure it generates is leveraged through the implementation of additional tactics simultaneously. This said, the use of PR starts with a killer press kit, and this article provides the ingredients you'll need to develop and distribute a kit that performs.

There are seven components to your press kit. They are:

1. **Develop Your Appearance** – Like everything else, your press kit works best when it looks good. The case or folder you place your materials in will influence the reaction of those who receive it, and in many cases determine whether they open it and read what is inside. In some cases you can use your brochure as the folder, especially if it has a flap for materials, but Tudog does not encourage this as the content of the brochure and the more condensed content of the press kit may compete with one another, or appear to be too much information (discouraging interaction).

2. **Write a Killer Cover Letter**- chances are the first (and if it's not killer, the only) thing the editor will read is your cover letter. It is the gateway to your kit and needs to be interesting and engaging enough to entice the reader to review the rest of the kit. The letter should be short and precise, providing the reasons why your company makes for good news. Make sure that you include contact information with the name and direct contact information for the person in your organization that has been designated as press liaison.

3. **Present Your Management** – in many cases the coverage you will generate will be about your company through a person – a member of your management team. The press generally seeks to present the story of your company in a way that interests readers and does not come off as an advertisement dressed up as editorial content. The presentation of your management – including their titles, individual photos, biographical data, their history with the company, what the company means to them, and their business vision and philosophy. By including this information you are giving the publications an opportunity to include your company in their pages through a profile of your management.

4. **Present Your Products/Services** – just as your management may serve as a basis for an article, so too can your products/services. You should include product/service sheets that are created specifically for the press kit (not extracted or duplicated from your brochure or sales materials). The angle should be directed toward the story lines you seek to promote, and include why the products/services provide a solution or solve a need. By including your products/services you are giving the publications the information they need to evaluate the newsworthiness and compelling nature of your company.

5. **Include Collaborating Materials** – your company should have a policy of issuing press releases for most newsworthy events (the introduction of a new product/service, appointment of a new executive, the signing of an agreement) on a regular basis. Your

press kit, while not including all of your press releases, should include those that are consistent with the coverage you are seeking.

6. Include Existing Coverage – if your company has already received press coverage include examples of the coverage – copies of the articles printed with the logos of the publication that printed them (online or traditional) – in the press kit. This will serve to demonstrate that your company has been deemed newsworthy by other publications and give examples of the story lines followed.

7. Include Your Newsletter – if your company has a newsletter you should include it in your press kit because it serves as an example of how you communicate with the outside world. The newsletter will give people an understanding of your company culture, your priorities, and of course, whatever information (such as events) is included. The newsletter will also demonstrate your company's respect for the power of the press, making the decision to publish an article about you a logical choice for editors.

In developing your press kit there are a number of things that are helpful to keep in mind. While the decision to give your company ink is usually based on a variety of criteria (including relevance, newsworthiness, available space, your access to the editor, and others), the odds go up if you follow Tudog's 3 basic rules of a killer press kit. They are:

1. Present Information in an Orderly Way – your press kit should be seen as a way for you to tell your story, and as such the way you present the information should flow as a story might. You need to make sure the order you present the information is logical to the story you are telling, and that the components tell the story you are attempting to get across.

2. Include a Promo Item – when you send out your press kit include a sample of a marketing promo item you use at trade shows and sales calls. This not only makes a gesture to the editor, but also shows a bit about the company's aggressive marketing approach.

3. Keep the Kits With You – whether in the trunk of your car, in your briefcase, or in your top desk draw, you need to have press kits with you wherever you go. They are your business card to the press, and there is always the chance you'll meet up with a press representative. Certainly your kits should be distributed to press outlets (online and traditional), but you should also have a few with you at all times to give out when the chance arises.

Keep in mind that the PR coverage is the fruits of a marketing process. You are competing for attention and attempting to make a sale (in the form of an editor's attention). Follow the rules and be aggressive (follow up) and before you know it your company will be getting the coverage it deserves.