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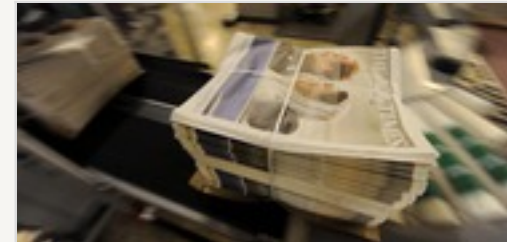
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At small businesses both old and new, many hats are worn behind the scenes. Press outreach is handled by an owner or manager rather than being outsourced to an experienced firm. To complicate things, PR strategies vary based on location and industry — choosing the best media outlet to approach is just half the battle. It's no surprise many small businesses find themselves in the dark.

But, getting press has powerful potential — the chance to get your product or service in front of people who may not only like it, but need it. Being coy with your offerings isn't only bad for business; it's unfair to people in your market who may be hoping to find something just like you.

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Getting press relies on four key pillars, explains Michelle Ellis of [Orapin Marketing](#): Always do research on media outlets, serve the media outlet's needs (and in turn, its audience) rather than being sales-y, keep your pitch as simple as possible and build a long-term relationship.

No matter if you have a big launch coming, or just continued solid service, it's never too soon to start letting people know. Here are four proven yet unconventional ways small businesses can garner press coverage.

1. Editorial Calendars

When you get press, it serves your business — but sometimes its easier to get your foot in the door when you focus on how you can help out the media outlet. Many publications plan themes well in advance and can offer an editorial calendar. For a local TV station, this could include events they plan to cover, while a monthly magazine might have seasonal themes. Once you've identified what they will be working on, see where your business can fit in and bring value — either through offering an expert point of view on a topic or by providing sources.

Local businesses can take advantage of local events that will garner media coverage by just attending.

"Never miss a photo opp," says [Allison Kugel](#), creative director of [Full Scale Media](#). Trade shows, charity events and yogurt shop openings are all possibilities — and photos can continue to build your image through blog posts, sharing on social media or to customers and partners.

Of course, what events you attend will depend on what market you hope to reach. [Herb Palmer Jr.](#), is a networking coach and author of motivational book [The Lobster and the Chicken](#). He goes to car shows and fairs with a red wagon that has a wooden lobster trap with his book inside, and says he found it an effective method to gain media coverage.

2. Create Your Own Content

"A great way to get press is to diversify your content strategy," says [Inna Kraner](#), managing editor for [The Expert Institute](#).

Kraner writes articles on law and expert witnesses for the company website, but also covers marketing, startups and technology in order to bring a more diverse audience to the website. Becoming a thought leader on a topic can lead to expert interviews with press down the road.

"Producing legitimate research and useful information on topics of interest to your current and prospective customers is a great way to get positive media coverage that shows off you/your firm's expertise," says [Michael J. Montgomery](#) of [Montgomery Consulting, Inc.](#)

The fundraising consulting firm does an annual survey of fundraising conditions in its region, Michigan — and was covered this year by both [MLive](#) and [Michigan Public Radio](#).

3. Do Good Deeds

One move that will endear you to both the media and the public is, of course, goodwill. Whether it's a large donation from a tech company or sponsoring a local organization, the possible media coverage can bring light to the other things your business is working on.

[Adam O'Leary](#), president of [Encite Marketing](#), says a painting company client started a charity event which rewarded one person each year with a free exterior home paint job. The event itself is newsworthy and builds on a previous relationship the company had built with a local reporter.

But with less resources, it's still possible to express your company's values.

"Constantly scan the news and see if there is any way you can hook yourself onto a developing story and how doing so will benefit the public," says [Shaun Walker](#), creative director at [HEROfarm](#). "This way, you take interest in something that has already garnered headlines.



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If you take a stand with the story or issue, you can become a first mover, and then you easily become a shaker."

Walker's agency did just that for a client, Nola Photo Fun. The company prints pictures and personalized books and decided to position itself as a preserver of

memories when the NFL was suing New Orleans companies for using the phrase "Who Dat." Snapfish created a [Facebook page](#) entitled "Who Dat Nation Preservation Project," which hit an emotional chord. The page gained 1,921 fans and had 1,330 interactions over about two months, and the website saw 2,787 unique visits and 5,081 page views, with over 300 new user profiles created in two weeks.

4. Get Other Press

The most interesting thing about press outreach is that it isn't ever just a one-time sprint. Press coverage can snowball into more press coverage, so instead of going after your industry's leading publication, consider pitching smaller blogs or local news. People who work in media do read their competitors and may be looking for a source — if they see you featured in a story, they can assume you're accessible and may reach out.

[Roy Sheppard](#), an author, pitched his book to UK's Daily Mail with a handwritten note, which turned into a [feature](#). Later a reporter from CNN came across the piece, which resulted in a second interview and [coverage](#).

How had your business nabbed press, and how has it led to the growth of your business? Tell us your story in the comments.

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