



PR Tips Resource

With all the things you have to deal with, planning and implementing a PR campaign could seem like a remote prospect. But with some basic steps, your emerging organization can get started on the road of managing its public image to create a positive buzz. Some tips on how to start your campaign:

- Lay the foundation before you build. Before you start promoting yourself, ask yourself if you're truly ready for primetime. Check your current online presence by searching for your organization on Google, Bing and other search engines. What will a client, customer or the media see about you? Will you show up on page one of the results? Can you be found at all? Is the bandwidth of your site sufficient to handle a larger number of visitors at a time?
- The website itself should of course be designed to represent you positively. Will a visitor be able to get a favorable and comprehensive picture of your mission, your services and your competence? They layout, organization, navigation and aesthetic appeal are all important, but the content is paramount. People will look past a lack of stylish features, but you must make the content compelling. State your mission succinctly, and showcase a story that testifies to it. - Once someone finds your site, is it functional, easy to navigate, and visually appealing? This applies to your Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media presence as well, as well as to your printed promotional material and publications.
- This is your best opportunity for branding – use a short and meaningful tagline and connect it to your name and mission, for example:
 - "Filling pantries. Filling lives." – Houston Food Bank

If your name is descriptive of your mission, you could try out a more abstract tagline that combines well with the name to convey a memorable association:

- "Know it. Fight it. End it" – Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
- Make it easier for a donor, promoter or the media to "lift" a message from your website for use in their communications. Do their homework for them by gathering promotional information in one location for an easy copy and paste. Talk about your organization, why it is unique, its history, mission, team and its successes. Include staff bios to lend credibility to your early stage organization. Include information on your funders, partners and clients to the extent feasible for added endorsement.
- Your job as promoter-in-chief requires you to be ready to present on a number of topics at any given time. You need to train yourself to be opportunistic and take advantage of chance meetings, planned events, networking sessions or social gatherings to speak persuasively about your organization, the field or niche, and recent developments. Craft the message to make it interesting and worth repeating – make you message spread peer-to-peer or through media to get you desirable notice.
- When targeting the media, keep your message simple and direct. Be creative - tie it to a current event or a commemorative observance – for example, Earth Day or Mother's Day - to give reporters a topical reason to write the story. Frame the message differently for the media – they do not like to promote individual organizations. Make it sound like a public service announcement, and act as a spokesman for an entire neighborhood, region, sector or industry. Your organization will benefit by association.
- Leveraging the media presence and contacts of your funder, partner or a major client can be a very effective way to get your message out. Look for topics that can be mutually beneficial.
- Only if it is true, offer yourself up to the media as an expert in a field, and let them know that you are willing to be interviewed, be on a panel or assist them in other possible ways. Media outlets need "experts" for their stories, and you need the publicity – a perfect mutual arrangement.