

White Paper 005

Share Your Knowledge

During an MBA marketing class I attended the professor told his class to send press releases about their companies, products and services to their local papers, stating that if the press release is well written, the editor will run it because he or she is hungry for free copy. I was astounded that the professor greatly misunderstood this essential piece of marketing. I raised my hand and asked if I could share my editorial experience. The professor agreed. The first statement I made was to disregard the professor's advice. I explained that even as a small publishing company, we must receive between 300 to 1,000 press releases a month. Most of them disappear very easily with the delete button. Editors aren't stupid. They understand some companies are trying to get free advertising with press releases. Readers aren't ignorant either. They understand that companies are biased in favor of their own product and will see the article as shameless promotion. One secret to getting your company in the paper is to share your knowledge.

Every business has a special knowledge base. As a member of a business you possess that valuable knowledge. By sharing that knowledge, especially in print, you establish yourself as an expert in your field and build brand awareness. The information you share with readers should help them begin to unravel a mystery that you can solve for them, alert them to a problem they may not know they have, or inform them that you understand a problem and have a solution for them. A good example would be a short article about bookkeeping written by a CPA who works with small businesses. In his or her daily interactions with clients the CPA, or a bookkeeper at the firm, may see a recurring problem with the way a certain type of expense is booked. Perhaps IRS rules have changed concerning the type of expense. By writing a short article on the IRS ruling, how small businesses should enter their expenses and what supporting documentation must be kept for the expense, the writer can help readers save time and money during tax season. This simple but valuable information establishes the CPA as a professional who cares about his or her clients. It also provides another level of customer service to not only the CPA's clients who read the paper, but people who may be looking for a CPA or feel they do not receive the attention they should from their current CPA.

In the CPA example, the article written would not discuss the CPA or the firm. It would just establish the CPA's expertise by the information presented. The CPA's name would appear in the byline and usually in a short bio at the end of the article stating how readers can get in touch with the CPA if they have further questions. This acts as a calling card. If a reader's interest is peaked she can contact the CPA, giving the CPA a chance to win a new client. Advertising in the paper in which the article appears gives the reader a second chance to recognize the author by associating the CPA's marketing with the information. If it takes a few months before the reader needs the CPA's services, the reader will remember the article when he or she sees the advertisement and will know whom to call.

If you have knowledge to share with the readers of The Groves Report, The View and The North Gilbert Breeze contact our editor, Denise Cummings, at editor@nearbynews.com. She will let you know if your article is right for our publication, our editorial calendar and requirements.