



HOW SECURING POSITIVE COVERAGE CAN BENEFIT YOUR ORGANISATION

CONSUMING NEWS

The ways in which we consume news has changed significantly since the turn of the millennium.

Traditional newspapers and magazines have been replaced by websites, blogs, vlogs, and social media.

Train carriages full of commuters reading newspapers is no longer the norm as smartphones and tablets have taken centre stage.



DIGITAL SHIFT

Changes to the digital landscape and advances in technology have had a major impact on the journalism industry.

Newsrooms have had to reinvent the way that they connect with their audience and workloads for journalists have increased as revenue budgets continue to shrink.

In 2016, The Independent printed its final newspaper after circulation had fallen to around 40,000 readers.

Last year, The Guardian announced that their digital revenues had outstripped print income for the first time.



What impact have these changes had on the public relations industry and is there still value in securing media coverage; both in traditional news publications and the new wave of digital media outlets?

TRUST

How a brand is perceived by the public is often determined by their trust in the service that the company provides, or product that they sell.

User-generated online reviews for example, give a clear indication of how the company compares against its competitors.

The media is much the same, with people consuming their news based on individual preferences, and from outlets that they trust.

In this era of fake news, it can be difficult to separate truth from fiction and with newsrooms employing less staff, stories are less scrutinised by editors and errors can slip through the net.

IMPACT ON PR

The PR industry has also experienced a great shift in recent times and the jobs of practitioners continue to evolve.

Time constraints on journalists has meant that getting them to leave their desks to attend press conferences or media events can be difficult, and the way in which PRs communicate with them has also changed.

Social media has created a new way to liaise with journalists more directly and the days of boozy long lunches are very much a thing of the distant past.

The Calacus team is made up of former journalists and so we understand the challenges that they face on a daily basis.

We know the importance of speaking to them in a language that they understand and making their jobs as easy as possible.

We ensure that our pitches are tailored to specific journalists rather than sending out generic press releases to vast email databases.

Securing coverage can never be guaranteed, but media relations is a two-way street and journalists do not take kindly to people that waste their time.



FIVE WAYS SECURING POSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE CAN BENEFIT YOUR ORGANISATION

1. Boost your credibility

Whether you work for a Fortune 500 company or a start-up, positive media coverage in reputable publications can help you become a well-respected and credible voice in the industry.

Earned media coverage is often seen as third-party validation, with consumers more trusting of articles written by journalists as opposed to advertising copy.

Recent studies have shown that the public trusts traditional media more than social media, but positive coverage is valuable across all different mediums.

Particularly if you are a relatively unknown organisation, getting your company name in the media can be a great way to tap into new audiences and explain why you should be trusted.

2. Become thought leaders

Finding individual niches and topics that you can provide expert comment on is vital and can help you become an industry leader.

This is not something that happens overnight, with a steady stream of opportunities required to ensure that you are in the media on a consistent basis.

To achieve this, you must be able to provide unique and insightful comments that the media will not be able to source anywhere else.

3. Increase sales/lead generation

Whether you work for a B2B or B2C organisation, the overall aim of your business will be to increase profits or to make a real difference.

Media coverage can be a great way of increasing awareness of the work that you do, from a charity fighting for change to a technology start-up that have created a new app.

Through targeted media outreach, you will be able to reach the individuals that matter most to your organisation and the more



positive stories that they read associated to your brand name, the more likely they are to make a purchase or inquire about your services.

Securing backlinks from websites that have a high domain authority can be a great way of shortening the sales process and improving your SEO so that customers can find you easily.

4. Developing relationships

Providing the media with relevant stories that are suited to their audience will help you to build relations with key contacts.

This can be especially important for when negative stories begin to circulate about your organisation or if a crisis breaks.

Having trusted contacts that you can rely on to communicate your point of view rather than just what has been reported elsewhere can ensure your brand perception does not suffer as a result.

5. Support organisational objectives

Hoping to secure a share of voice in the media without aligning your strategy with organisational objectives is a waste of time.

Positive brand stories will only have the desired impact if key themes are included in the piece that will support the overall direction of your company.

Although you cannot dictate how you come across in a third-party story, creating messaging documents can help ensure that all employees are singing from the same hymn sheet.

While the saying goes that all publicity is good publicity, ultimately it will only be of value if it contributes to helping achieve organisational objectives.



FIVE TACTICS THAT CAN SECURE YOU MEDIA COVERAGE

1. Providing commentary on relevant industry news

Sharing your insights on key topics that are being discussed in the media is a great way of showing off your expertise and ensuring that you are part of the big conversations.

From reality TV to technology giants and from global sporting events to key political issues; a mix of proactive and reactive media outreach is essential.

Looking at sport as an example, key calendar hooks in the British summer such as Wimbledon, cricket Test matches, and the British Grand Prix, are big stories that will take up a lot of column inches.

Finding ways to associate your brand with these stories is a great way to reach widespread audiences.

Breaking news stories also offer a good opportunity to provide expert comment on and shows the importance of keeping an eye on the media and what is being discussed at all times.

2. Insights and research

Undertaking research on a particular subject can offer an opportunity to secure coverage, but there has to be a hard news angle.

Research that doesn't provide the public with fresh information or is not engaging enough to keep them reading will simply not cut it.

It is important to be aware that the people you are targeting are unlikely to have as much industry knowledge as you, and research should not be too niche or filled with vast amounts of business jargon.

3. Announcements and explanations about products/services

Company announcements can be an effective way of reaching your target audience and promoting the business.

New client wins, award nominations or c-suite executive appointments are worth sharing on your owned media channels, as well with relevant journalists.



You must be careful not to bombard the media with too much company news, however, as they will be put off if they feel that you are using them just for your own sake and not providing them with genuine news angles.

Trying to secure coverage for things such as new website redesigns or changes to your company logo would be a waste of time unless you're a business the size of Facebook or Google.

4. Influencers and celebrities

Working with influencers or celebrities can be an effective way to get the media engaged, but you must ensure that any collaborations and partnerships are authentic and serve a purpose.

Paying one-off sums to individuals with high-profile followings on social networks is unlikely to have any long-term positive impact on your PR activity, and we have seen the rise of micro-influencers in recent times.

Micro-influencers have smaller followings on the likes of YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat, but their audience is far more engaged and are more likely to be influenced by what they see or read on their profiles.

Ambassadorial roles are a great way to create a long-lasting partnership with someone that believes in your product or service and offers far greater return on investment than ad-hoc influencer marketing.

5. PR stunt

Storytelling and creativity are crucial aspects of PR that can often be overlooked by those outside of the industry.

Writing a press release to launch a new product or service is unlikely to cut through the busy news agenda and as a result brands have had to look for other ways to stand out from their competitors.

High-profile PR stunts are a great way to get the media and general public talking about you but require extensive planning to ensure that you maximise exposure.

Stunts also offer a good opportunity to secure media opportunities across all channels; paid, earned, shared and owned.



CALACUS

MEDIA AUDIT

Do you currently work with a PR agency?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you handle all media inquiries and outreach in-house?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you review your PR strategy every 3-6 months?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Are your entire staff aware of PR and the benefits that it can provide an organisation?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you feel that you could do more to promote the work that your organisation does?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you monitor the news for relevant stories that expert spokespeople could provide comments for?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have active followings on social media that engage with the content you post?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a company blog on your website that is regularly updated with fresh content?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have existing contacts with relevant industry media?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do employees post company news on their individual social platforms (e.g. LinkedIn)?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Does your company rank on the first page of Google when searching for top organisations in an industry (e.g. sports PR agencies)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you currently have a budget assigned to PR?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>