

5 Ways PR Wins at Generating B2B Sales

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

Our PR firm has received a recent uptick in inquiries from B2B companies hungry to generate business during uncertain times. Advertising is expensive and supply chain issues, looming inflation and the ongoing global pandemic increase pressure to secure new business.

Public relations is a cost-friendly, highly effective strategy for generating inbound leads and boosting sales. Here are five reasons B2B media relations and press-coverage strategies for your company should always be part of your marketing mix.

Related: [The Role of PR in the Changing B2B Landscape](#)

1. Americans still trust trade press

The Reuters Institute recently reported that the U.S. ranks last among 46 countries for trust in media. According to the survey of 92,000 media consumers, only 29% trust mainstream news outlets, making PR an uphill battle for many brands.

However, trade publications and business journals remain the premier platform for reaching business decision-makers. Most trade publications have good reputations with industry experts. Many are published online offering newsletters, making it convenient for professionals to peruse industry news daily.

2. Earned media placements build authority and trust

We call it “earned,” because media coverage is published by virtue of the content-value and never paid for. B2B companies typically sell higher-priced products and services, and the sales cycle is longer. When a company, product or service is mentioned in the media, awareness increases, and the consideration phase of important decision-makers may accelerate.

Since trade publications target specific industries, job functions and interests, an article or mention is more likely to be seen by those who *most want to buy what you most want to sell*. Innovation, success stories and relatable case examples from current customers build authority and imply potential customers can trust a company. The power of third-party media validation provides “social proof” that a business is relevant and credible. It also provides an opportunity for businesses to share values or purpose-driven missions that may drive competitor differentiation.

3. Thought leadership boosts reputation

Byline articles and inclusion in media expert lists are excellent ways to signal thought leadership.

Many media outlets accept byline articles on timely topics and will publish “as is” if the content is relevant, non-promotional and helpful to the audience. Landing on media expert lists keeps you top-of-mind with journalists who may need an expert to weigh in on a situation or provide a quick quote. Published articles reinforce your company’s expertise and provide real-life examples of how your product or services does what it claims to do.

4. PR placements are cumulative and can be repurposed

PR is cumulative and requires a bit of patience and a lot of persistence.

It can take several months to build the right media relationships and secure placements. However, after a journalist or media outlet trusts that your business delivers quality, thought-provoking content that is not overly promotional, placements will begin to increase.

Our firm has worked with a captive insurance company for three years, attributing to an 800% increase in media impressions and a 300% increase in media placements. This is the result of the company understanding that an impactful B2B PR campaign does not happen overnight. It's a process that requires a commitment of time for optimal results.

To augment the influence of PR placements and further utilize the power of third-party media placements to generate leads, we suggest businesses repurposing coverage at least six ways:

- Share on social media channels: Link to the article, quote or mention via social media platforms. Always acknowledge the media outlet with a comment like "Honored to be featured in XYZ publication."
- Boost on LinkedIn: Since there's a good chance key potential customers may be on LinkedIn, we recommend budgeting to boost the post shared by the company.
- Post the media placement to the blog and/or add it to the press section of your website.
- Utilize the placement in an eblast or newsletter, and don't forget to include current customers in communication.

- Thought leadership pieces can often be expanded and turned into white papers for utilization on websites and email marketing campaigns. Often, white papers live behind a lead-generation contact form that must be completed for obtaining access to the entire article, further boosting opportunities for lead generation.
- Turn print placements into multi-media. Create engaging slideshows or shoot a short video discussing the article topic. Share everywhere.

Related: [4 Tools for Perfecting Your B2B Sales Funnel](#)

5. PR is measurable

Attribution has historically been a challenge for PR pros. We're always looking for ways to track PR efforts to lead generation and sales and prove value to the C-suite.

Fortunately, we have numerous attribution models now, and metrics and analytics are more sophisticated than ever. It is a best practice to establish success measurement expectations ahead of launching PR campaigns. Benchmarks and measurement dashboards are established to be tracked month-over-month and year-over-year.

Measurement examples include:

- Audience reach, impressions and click-through rates. (Earned media value, or ERV, which is the practice of attributing a monetary value to a media placement, is an antiquated measurement and is not considered reliable.)
- Correlating spikes in website traffic to media placement and analyzing cumulative increases to the website
- Tracking backlinks to the website and assessing the impact PR has on SEO rankings

- Measuring increases in social media followers and engagement, including overall tone and sentiment about the company
- Tracking inbound leads and completed online lead generation forms
- Gauging increases in the quantity and quality of media placements over time

Bottom line: Savvy business executives understand and value the potential of PR to influence credibility and trust, showcase thought-leadership and tap into emerging sales funnels. From startups to established businesses, B2B PR is a strategic pathway to success.

Related: 6 Fatal B2B Sales Mistakes You Must Avoid

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/424576>