How to Turn Personal Adversity Into a PR Strategy That Accelerates Your Growth



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Key Takeaways

- Why your personal story might be the missing key to unlocking media coverage and business growth.
- The unexpected way storytelling can transform your PR strategy and boost your industry authority.

We like to believe we make decisions based on facts and logic — but human nature tells a different story. More often than not, emotions drive our choices first and we seek facts afterward to justify them.

This is why storytelling is such a powerful tool. When you tell a story instead of just presenting data, you help people visualize the message, making it more relatable. Our brains are wired this way; stories trigger the release of oxytocin – the hormone that fosters trust. Since the dawn of humanity, storytelling has been how we pass knowledge and build connections.

So how do you leverage storytelling to improve your chances of getting featured in the media?

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Identify your origin story

Let me share a real example. A few years ago, I started working with a client—one of the smartest financial experts I've ever met. He regularly shared insightful, actionable advice online and on stage. By all accounts, he was top-tier. Yet he couldn't break through to mainstream media.

During our onboarding, we dug deeper than credentials and expertise. We explored his personal "why." That's when we struck gold.

He began his career running a successful dental practice. But everything changed when his daughter faced three life-threatening health crises. He couldn't juggle his practice and support her, so he sold the business to focus on her recovery.

He invested the proceeds in real estate – a steadier but less lucrative path. Over time, his income grew. At Christmas, he sent cards sharing this journey. Friends in dentistry reached out, curious about his new path. What started as informal advice grew into a coaching business, then a thriving real estate education community focused on helping others achieve financial freedom.

This story set him apart emotionally and authentically — earning him hundreds of organic media features over the years.

Take time to reflect on what personally drives you. Look beyond your professional achievements and identify the defining moments or challenges that shaped your journey.

Distill your story into a core positioning statement

Here's what every entrepreneur should take away:

First, you have an origin story. Maybe not as dramatic, but there's always a defining moment that pushes you to start your business. For me, it was a health crisis that nearly ended my life and my company. I used PR to rebuild my brand, which inspired my agency's pivot to focus on storytelling-driven public relations.

Second, distill your story into a core positioning statement — a concise narrative that captures your origin, what you do, why it matters, and who you serve. This isn't an autobiography; it's a powerful snapshot designed to emotionally connect with your audience.

Write a draft of your core positioning statement. Keep it brief but compelling. Share it with trusted peers for feedback and refine until it feels authentic and clear.

Use your story to support your pitch

Finally, use your core positioning statement to support your pitch — not as the opener but as proof of your unique qualifications. Start pitches with a compelling hook — breaking news, a surprising stat, or an emotional trigger —then show how your expertise addresses the audience's needs,

wrapping up with your core positioning statement to seal the deal.

Structure your pitch with a strong hook first, followed by relevant data or insights, and then weave in your core positioning statement as your unique selling point.

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Share your story consistently across channels

You already have a powerful story waiting to be told. Find it, refine it and use it to craft pitches that make you stand out – because that emotional connection is what gets media attention and builds your authority.

Promote your story across your website, social media, press releases, and speaking engagements to build a cohesive and authentic brand narrative. Audit your current marketing materials and online profiles. Ensure your origin story or core positioning statement is clearly reflected across all channels.

Practice and update your narrative regularly

Rehearse incorporating your story naturally into pitches so it feels authentic and persuasive, rather than forced. Remember to revisit and refine your core positioning statement as your business grows and evolves.
Set a reminder to revisit your narrative quarterly. Update it to reflect new milestones, lessons, or shifts in your business focus.

You already have a powerful story – use it strategically to

build media interest and grow your brand authority. The emotional connection your story creates is the key to standing out in today’s crowded marketplace.

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