

10 ways to attract your local media and improve your hotels public relations

Obtaining free coverage in your local paper, magazines and on local radio can be a challenge however, the potential benefits of being seen in editorial sections, rather than as a paid advert, can be significant and, better still, completely free. Consider following the following steps to help you make the local news.

- 1) **Get to know your local media** – Find out who's who in your local papers, magazines, radio stations and community websites. Keep a note of the names of the decision makers such as editors, feature writers and broadcasters and note their target audience, publishing dates and deadlines.
- 2) **Networking** – Get yourself or a hotel representative involved in local networking opportunities including the Chamber of Commerce, Hoteliers Association or Council advisory committee. Offer to host events and meetings and be prepared to provide suitable quotes to local media representatives.
- 3) **Approach Journalists** – when you see journalists, editors or the like at local events make an effort to introduce yourself, be friendly and develop relationships. Make it known, although not pushily, that you are available for commenting and could introduce them to other prominent local business people.
- 4) **Provide stories** – Don't wait to be asked for a story. Write brief, informative pieces about your opinions on business matters, local events, human interest stories and the like and submit them to the contacts you have made.
- 5) **Write Press Releases** – write press release about your business and submit to your contacts list. Always start with a clear headline that sums up the story and write the release in plain, easy to understand language. If possible supply, a quote, background information or images to support your story and finally provide your contact details.
- 6) **Exploit PR Opportunities** – Everyone loves a success story so exploit this by telling the local media about everything from a 10th trading anniversary to the fact that you have just served your 10000th customer or created a number of new jobs by expanding your business.
- 7) **Create PR opportunities** – proactively create PR opportunities such as teaming up with the local paper or radio station at Christmas or Valentines Day by providing a prize for a competition.
- 8) **Get involved in the local community** – Sponsorship of a local sports team, charity or event can generate plenty of PR opportunities. Back this up with a press release or story submitted to your contacts.
- 9) **Fundraising** – adopt a local charity and organise an annual fundraising event. Not only will it create income for your hotel on a potentially quite night the publicity gained could be significant. Invite local dignitaries and if the local paper won't send a photographer then take some high resolution photo's yourself and submit with a press release.
- 10) **Review your success** – successful PR takes effort and time, but can be very rewarding. Take the time to review local press to establish how successful you have been and perhaps even cost the coverage at the advertising rates.

Have a go – PR is not a dark art, it just takes effort, time and imagination.

Robert Smith
Director

www.completehotelservices.co.uk