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How to Build Free Buzz for Your Business in 3 Simple Steps!

As a new, small business owner, money is tight. But that doesn't mean you need to wait for a big investor to build buzz and generate sales for your products and services.

The key is to conduct targeted, public relations and search engine optimization (SEO) on your own...right away.

Here are three, great ways to boost sales, awareness and credibility fast – without spending a cent!

1. Call targeted media-members directly.

By getting press members to talk about your business, you can build awareness fast without buying advertising or hiring a publicist. Plus, you cannot purchase this third-party credibility.

To start, figure out what your target market watches on television, visits online, reads, and listens to on the radio. Research the reporters, writers and producers who cover your industry at these various media venues. Make a list of their names, contact information and areas of expertise. Look at archived publications and shows. Then, figure out how your products and services fit into these media venues. Ask yourself:

- What kind of benefits can I offer these audiences?
- Why will this particular, media member care about what I have to say?
- Can I share an interesting idea related to a current trend, industry event or news item?

Use your responses to create a unique story angle for the individual media-members on your list. Practice your pitch, and then call each person on your list. If you're nervous, start with a local reporter at a smaller publication.

Press members like to hear directly from entrepreneurs who are passionate about what they do and can act as a resource for future stories. Because of this, you may be surprised to discover that your one phone call results in a feature story catering to your target market!

This can lead to other news stories, more media coverage and new business. And even if you don't get a feature story right away, at least you have started a relationship with targeted, media members. Now, they know you and your business exist and may think of you for future stories.

2. Optimize your sites for the search engines.

Can potential customers find you on the Web? If not, you are losing out on a huge opportunity. By incorporating appropriate keywords into your online copy and adding description tags, search engines will be able to find your site and share it with people who want your products and services.

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SEO is not difficult, but it does take time and effort. To start, look at your site and ask yourself if you are providing value. As soon as site visitors arrive on your home page, do you answer their questions and provide a solution to their problems?

If not, add articles, links to resources, contact information, and other key data that is important to potential customers. Focus on the unique benefits you offer.

Next, check the free tools available at www.keyworddiscovery.com and www.wordtracker.com to find appropriate keywords. And for additional help, look at the various articles online related to SEO, such as http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/content/sep2007/sb20070910_481583.htm

What words are people searching for online to find products and services like yours? Make a list, and add these keywords throughout your site, using three to four keywords per page, three times each.

Next, add a title tag no longer than 60 characters and a description tag no longer than 175 characters to your Web site coding. To see samples of how to do this, simply visit sites online. Then, click on “View” and “Source” in your menu. You’ll see the title and description tags at the beginning of the site’s coding.

3. Post an SEO Press Release

By writing and posting a press release optimized for the search engines, you can increase site visitors and get higher, online rankings. Simply take your list of SEO keywords and add them throughout your release.

To start, think about the message you want to convey and why people will care about your news. For help, check out the standard, press releases on sites like PRNewswire, www.prnewswire.com, and BusinessWire, www.businesswire.com, to see how to format your release.

Then, all you do is start with a clear headline that conveys your main message and the top benefit for readers. It should be short, void of gimmicks, clichés, or sales copy and written with action verbs in the present tense. And if you can’t fit all of your information in the headline, add a sub-head. This is just another brief headline under your main headline.

Now, move onto your opening paragraph with the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your news. You’ll want to place the most important data at the top of your press release. After all, media members often stop reading after the headline or first paragraph.

Next, write the body of your press release in a few paragraphs. Include quotes and statistics from credible sources and provide valuable information your readers will find interesting.

Then, at the end of your release, add an “About” section, also known as a “boiler plate.” This is just a short paragraph about your business and the products and services you provide. Keep it brief and offer contact information at the end so people know how to reach you.

And when you are finished, check your work at free sites like PRNewswire’s [iCrossing.com](http://www.icrossing.com/tools/calculator.htm), <http://www.icrossing.com/tools/calculator.htm> or Hubspot’s Press Release Grader at

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<http://pressrelease.grader.com/>. This way, you'll get the most online visibility possible and attract site visitors.

Finally, proofread your release for errors and post it on free sites related to your industry or those I've listed at <http://www.rembrandtwrites.com/FreePressReleasePostingSites.htm>. And if you have trouble writing your release, hire a skilled, SEO copywriter or check out the writing and distribution services available at sites like www.prweb.com, PR Newswire, www.prnewswire.com/ and BusinessWire, www.businesswire.com. You can always start with a minimal budget and spend more on bigger news as your business grows.

When times are tough, don't get discouraged!

Instead, take action. As a new entrepreneur with a limited budget, you can do your own search engine optimization and publicity. By contacting media members via phone, optimizing your site for the search engines, distributing SEO press releases, and researching the services and people that can fit your specific needs, deadlines and budget, you can build buzz about your products and services... fast.

It all comes down to providing value and giving site visitors and media members what they want. Now, it takes a little more time and effort to do all of these activities yourself. But your hard work can pay off in new sales and media attention. And as soon as your business grows, you can turn this important work over to a professional, and concentrate on your core business activities... so go for it! You have nothing to lose, and new customers to gain!

About the Author

As the founder of Rembrandt Communications[®], LLC, Melanie is a public-relations consultant, SEO copywriter and published writer with over 15 years of extensive experience and an excellent track record for success. She specializes in helping small-business owners get the national media attention they need via targeted, public relations and SEO copywriting efforts.

Melanie offers tips and insights via her [blog](#) and monthly newsletter, "*Rembrandt Writes Insights*[®]." And she provides in-depth training presentations to various businesses and organizations nationwide. Melanie is also the author of "*Secrets of Becoming a Publicist*," published by American Writers & Artists, Inc., "*7 Steps to Successful Public Relations*," and the host of the SmallBiz America Radio segment, "[PR and SEO Quick Tips with Melanie Rembrandt](#)."

A magna cum laude graduate of the prestigious UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, Melanie is the official small-business PR expert for StartupNation and *Pink Magazine Online*. Melanie only accepts a limited number of clients. Then, she acts as an extension of your team, provides the individual attention you deserve and uses her in-the-trenches media relations and SEO copywriting experience to help your business succeed.

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