



PR TOOLKIT FOR START UP BUSINESSES





INTRODUCTION

Would you like your brand mentioned in the nation's newspapers?

What about watching your products trend on social media, or having your voice replayed on broadcast media?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, but you don't have an endless marketing budget or have little idea where to start, the Start Up Loans Company in conjunction with JournoLink, an online PR platform, has put together this PR handbook with you in mind.

As one of five million small businesses in the UK, you make up the backbone of the country's economy.

This short handbook will help you to compete with the country's multinationals in managing their PR strategies.

Journalists and commentators genuinely want to hear the small business perspective just as much as big business comment.

This guide is dedicated to all those whose waking hours are overtaken by their small businesses, but whose vision and spirit is free from corporate constraint.

So if you are proud to say, 'I run my own business', and want others to hear, then take control of your PR.

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SECTION ONE

WHAT PR MEANS FOR A SMALL BUSINESS

A close-up photograph of a person's hands using a white stylus on a tablet. The tablet screen displays a website with various elements like a play button icon, text, and images. The background is a blurred desk with a laptop and other items. The image is overlaid with a dark blue gradient at the top and bottom.

*[If you read nothing else in this guide, read this chapter.
It will tell you what PR is all about, and why big corporates spend
hundreds of thousands of pounds a year on getting it right.]*

WHAT IS PR?

The words Public Relations don't fully explain what PR encompasses. Public Relations implies 'Customer Service'. It is much broader. PR is what people say about your brand and your products outside of the confines of your office or 'factory gate'. That phrase '*what people say*' is very important. It is important because people... your customers... believe what 'other people' say far more readily than they believe what you say. That's why it should be part of your overall marketing strategy.

Advertising, promotions, and email updates to clients all add to this mix, but third-party endorsements, in other words what trusted third parties say about you, is more valuable than all of these. When we buy products online, as many of us do now, we immediately click on 'reviews' to see what the truth is about the product, and we take notice of the comments.

PR hones in on that behaviour. It involves constantly trying to get trusted, independent commentators to promote your business, your product and your brand. Experts will tell you that positive third-party comments are three times more effective than advertising in winning customers. Just as a side benefit too, managed shrewdly, PR is materially cheaper to achieve than simple advertising.

View PR as 'Personal Recommendations' as much as 'Public Relations'.

THERE ARE FOUR KEY COMPONENTS TO PR:

- 1 : Proactively distributing your news through press releases, trying to entice journalists, bloggers and broadcasters to include your brand in their articles.
- 2 : Responding to journalists' requests for spokespeople, comments and case studies as they compile their stories and need to include real life examples to make their copy interesting.
- 3 : Engaging with social chatter, whether through the recognised channels of Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook or Instagram, or simply by posting a blog, to become part of a real-time conversation.
- 4 : Ensuring your shop window, i.e. your website, is alive and current. That's where people check you out; whether it's those who you want to be writing about you, or the potential customers who have taken note of what others have said and are now on the verge of being convinced.

WHY IS PR IMPORTANT FOR A SMALL BUSINESS

Personal recommendations are, by far, the best way to get sales. A good marketing strategy aims to get satisfied customers to recommend your business to a friend.

Imagine the power of being able to get someone to recommend it to 10,000 friends. That's what a trusted journalist with an average readership can do. That's what a blogger with a decent following can do. Add two noughts and that's what a regional radio station can do.

To a big business with a huge marketing spend, affording TV adverts and billboard posters, 10,000 pairs of eyes reading a newspaper may not be so important. But to a small business without an open cheque book, the value becomes disproportionately high.

The reach will differ from business to business, and will depend upon the outlet in which the comment is made.

ASSESSING THE VALUE OF PR FOR A SMALL BUSINESS

Enlisting the services of a PR agency is unlikely to be an affordable option for a start up.

Value is generally calculated by comparing the coverage with the cost of advertising in the specific outlet and multiplying it by three.

'Return on Investment' is the usual phrase used when assessing value, i.e. how much has been spent on fees, and the value of the column inches it achieved.

Of course, the truth is that the only real value of PR is what it does for sales.

Brand recognition plus a decent product will inevitably lead to increased sales, but it can be difficult to be precise about which marketing activity led to that increase, and when.

If you don't have large amounts to spend, then don't feel you have to. Follow these principles and you'll succeed:

- Don't spend a fortune on an expensive PR agency if you can use an economical alternative, or a 'do it yourself' model
- Treat PR as part of the overall marketing mix, and accept that each part of the mix will deliver value at different times
- Recognise the value of independent third-party endorsement of your brand and product as high on the value curve, and spend at least as much time on external PR as on customer newsletters, advertising and sales promotions.

SECTION TWO

THE KEY COMPONENTS OF PR

This section goes through the main elements of PR. These are the vehicles businesses should use to get their news and comments into the external world.



Remember: see PR as your external image. How does everyone outside of the business view you? What's their perception of your brand and product? What do trusted commentators say about you?

THERE ARE FOUR COMPONENTS TO FOCUS ON:

- ////// PRESS RELEASES
- ////// EDITORIAL REQUESTS
- ////// SOCIAL MEDIA
- ////// WEBSITE

PRESS RELEASES

Most people have heard of press releases, but, equally, most businesses don't think that they are big enough to make use of them. In fact, anyone can send out a press release. It is easy and fairly cheap to do.

Press releases are generally the best way to inform journalists and commentators about news, although they do need to be posted in conjunction with social media activity.

Sending out a press release is one thing. The key, though, is actually getting it picked up by journalists, and to do that it needs to be constructed properly and sent out at the right time to the right journalists.

The following sections go through these critical disciplines, but for the moment you should view press releases as the main tool that you are going to use to try and catch the attention of those all-important writers.

EDITORIAL REQUESTS

There is no better time to win the attention of a journalist and entice them to write about you, your brand and your product than when they are actually asking you for comments. They do this through making 'editorial requests'.

Journalists' articles are barren without expert comments, case studies and real-life contexts. Newspapers without relevant images and pictures don't sell.

When planning their articles, journalists will often ask for input. They use various channels to do this, from requests through Twitter, to more detailed ones through dedicated agencies, who distribute them to their client base.

There is no certainty that responding to an editorial request will lead to media coverage, but there are a number of rules to follow which will increase the prospects of being chosen from amongst the list of businesses that reply.

Section six looks at this winning formula in more detail.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an art in itself, and is dynamic. By its very nature, it is a real-time conversation, and it moves quickly. Engaging in it successfully means constantly watching what's 'trending'.

There are a number of platforms today, but the critical ones to focus on are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. All involve both sides of a conversation, the writer and the reader, and all are increasingly important in managing an external image.

Journalists use social media to ask for editorial responses, businesses use social media to promote and position their brands, and consumers use social media to comment, both positively and negatively, about their experiences with products.

Social media is awake 24/7; so many larger businesses outsource the management of it to large agencies. This need not be hugely expensive, but by following some simple rules a business can manage its own social media strategy, ensuring that it runs its social chatter, rather than the social chatter running it.

WEBSITE

Having a website is an absolute imperative for every business. It seems obvious, but is a relatively recent phenomenon and there are still businesses who believe that a website is an expensive optional extra. It need not be expensive, is not optional, nor is it an extra. It is a critical part of any business's external image.

Websites are not only the 21st century Yellow Pages, but are also the validators and authenticators of a business's credibility. Not just a phone number, but a complete pitch for the business too.

Before a business is launched, the website must be built and live.

There are two ways to approach this. It can either be outsourced, or the business can do it themselves using one of the online modular tools that are now freely available and inexpensive, such as WordPress. As with most things, the more you spend, the more you get, but a perfectly credible website can be built by anyone, with very little investment.

But that's not the end of the story. You must ensure that it is 'active'. The vast majority of small business websites have not been touched since they were first built, and at best are merely a 'book cover'. At worst they are out of date.

A business should see its website as its shop window, fresh and up-to-date. It is a key part of any PR strategy.

It is fine to celebrate how many hits a website gets, but what is more important is how long the visitor is enticed to stay. That applies both to prospective customers, and to journalists.

Generally speaking, any journalist looking to pick up on a story in a press release, or deciding which editorial request response to use, will look at the business's website for further background and contact details. That further background must include latest news and business updates. If not, the journalist will see the business as 'uninteresting'.

Two absolute musts on a website are comments from social media, including blogs, and a media room with latest news releases.

This all sounds like a lot of work, but it is perfectly feasible to have everything automated and run at a minimal cost. It is important to make sure both are integrated into the website from the outset.

Section ten covers where a business can look for help in getting everything properly set up.

SECTION THREE

THE PR STRATEGY IN 30 MINUTES A WEEK



Once a strategy is established, just 30 minutes a week can be all it takes to stay on top of your PR. The strategy itself takes a little longer to put in place, but by following simple guidelines, a workable plan is easy to create and can be highly effective with minimal spend.

BUILDING YOUR PR PLAN

For each quarter, spread your headings over 3 months, including the following:

ACTIVITY:

- Launches / proactive news / research / case studies
- Advertising
- Calendar events

RESPONSE:

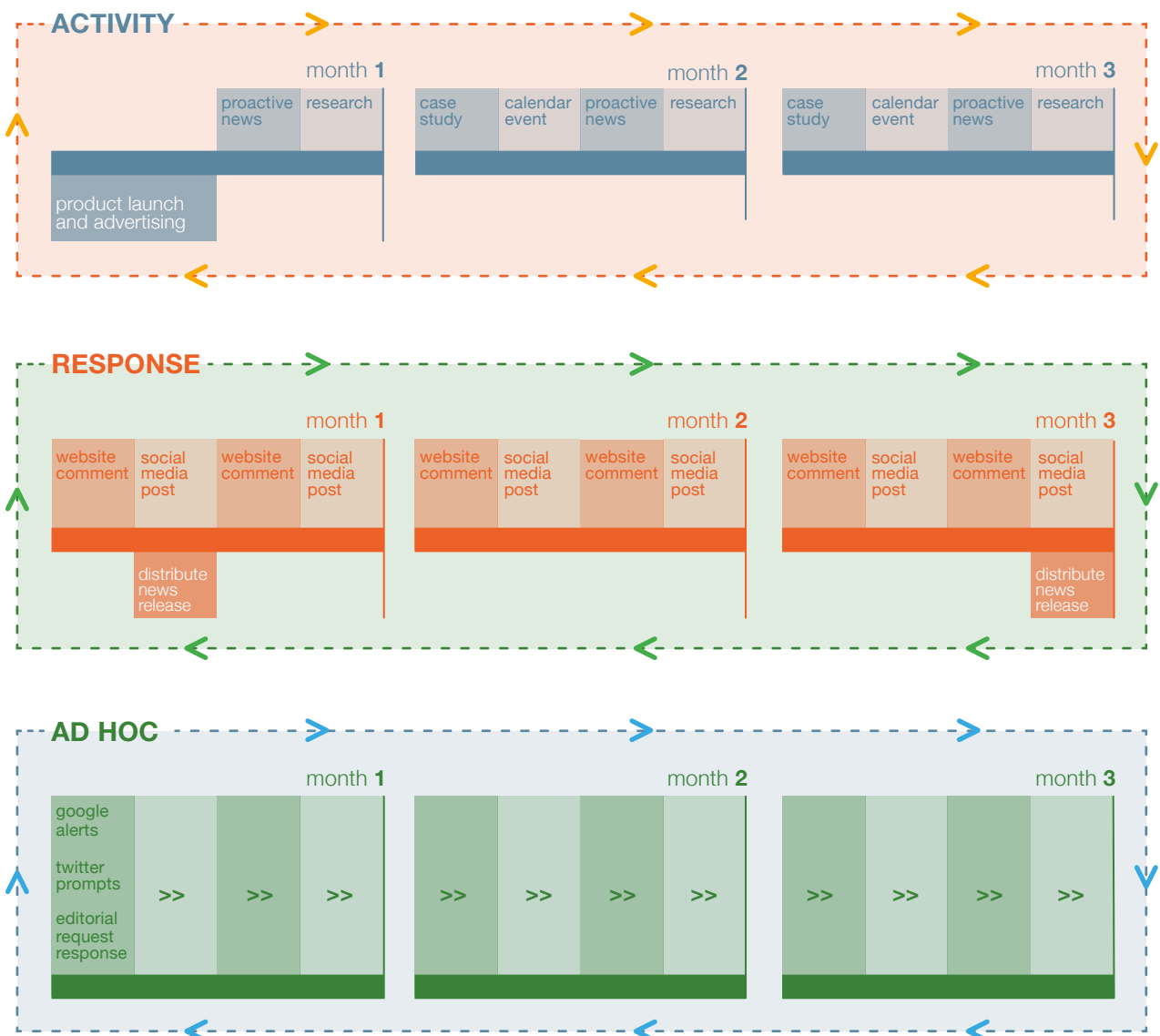
- News release to distribute
- Comment for website only
- Social media and blog

AD HOC:

- Editorial request responses
- Google Alerts / social media prompts

PR PLAN TEMPLATE

Please see below an example of how you could map out a three-month PR cycle.



RECOMMENDED STORIES TO ISSUE TO MEDIA

Consider issuing press releases to the media when you have natural news related to the following:

- Received a listing for your product(s) with a national retailer.
- An anniversary, first/second year of trading, etc.
- Plans to expand, or announcing an expansion of the business.
- Launched new product(s) or development within the business.
- A major new hire/appointment within the business.
- Hit/exceeded a big target or milestone.
- A strong news hook (i.e. a father and son business to tie into Father's Day).

ACTIVITY

This has three components, all of which are under your control and can be planned:

- 1** : **Any activity that the business has in its plan, whether a launch of a new product through to engagement in a local charity event, is worthy of an external comment.**

Remember that even if it does not get picked up by journalists, it will sit as updated news in the media section of your website and ultimately keep the site lively and current to any viewers.

Research outputs, top tips and case studies that can be used by journalists in advice pieces are always in demand.

- 2** : **External PR should support any advertising that is planned at the same time. If media coverage is achieved, it will materially add to the effectiveness of the advertising.**

- 3** : **Any events or news releases planned by others that can be leveraged by a business for its own benefit should be.**

This could be anything from the release of a government report on a subject that is relevant to the business, to a seasonal event, for instance Valentine's Day or the London Marathon, where a business can link what it does to the event.

The secret is to access a calendar where all the work has been done already in listing the events, and to get the timing right to coincide with the journalists' planning cycles. You can use an online retail marketing calendar as a guide to help your business capitalise on key events.



RESPONSE

This section helps you plan your proactive PR placement in advance. Again, there are three things to focus on:

1 Actual, well thought out press releases. Journalists are wary of businesses that pump out press releases too frequently with the sole aim of the journalists doing their advertising for them, but for genuine news that it is reasonable to expect the general public to have an interest in, then they are keen to hear about it.

Planning the press release can be done weeks in advance, and can then simply be held ready to distribute when the time is right.

It should be positioned around, and built on, anything that a business has identified in the 'activity' part of the plan.

Every business should be planning a press release at least every three months.

Section five goes through how press releases should be structured for best results.

2 The business has to decide whether a piece of news, comment, response to some data being released, or the winning of a contract, is worthy of broad-scale distribution, or whether it just wants to use it as an update to the website.

The process is the same, in that the news comment is written and put into the website media room, but just not distributed. It is then available for any visitors to the website, whether prospective customers or journalists, to read. Critically, this keeps the website up-to-date, and retains visitors' interest.

At least every few weeks, a business should be posting its latest news and comment into its media room.

3 As an alternative to trying to entice journalists with what is truly 'news', many businesses will schedule a series of social media blogs.

These are generally fairly short advice-based articles, or comment pieces, and are posted on the business' social media feeds, and into the media room, but not formally distributed to journalists.

Blogs are a good way for a business to keep its website updated, and to keep the business brand in front of commentators.

Bloggers are becoming increasingly important as a means to achieve trusted third-party endorsements, and it is not uncommon for a journalist to rely on recognised bloggers for some of their article content.

Every business should plan on writing a blog piece at least monthly.

These need not be long, but should be of interest and relevant. Topics for blogs can range from 'Tips on how to grow tomatoes' to 'Avoiding wrinkles as the ageing process sets in'. Simply anything relevant to the business, which may be of interest.



AD HOC

The world of news never sleeps, and journalists are always looking out for new angles to trending stories. These can be generated in two ways.

Editorial requests:

As discussed in section two, businesses should set themselves up on a platform to receive these from journalists when appropriate.

Section six looks at how to respond to editorial requests when they arrive.

Pre-empting editorial requests:

Businesses watching the news in their sector can simply comment on something trending. They can either post a quick press release, or simply comment on social media.

This does require the business to be watching what is going on, and being prepared to comment quickly. Current news becomes old news very quickly in the eyes of a journalist, and commenting when the agenda has moved on is a waste of time.

Few businesses are keen to have their attention diverted away from their main day-to-day sales and cash collection priorities to spend too much time actively watching for ad hoc news items, but they can take three simple steps as prompts without being distracted:

- Set up Google Alerts for key words in the business sector.
- Follow key sector journalists on social media, i.e. Twitter.
- Keep an eye on the news, i.e. BBC News 24.

When something relevant appears, simply comment briefly and quickly, along the lines for example of 'XXX, owner of YYY responds to the Prime Minister's call for more job creation. Simplify the process, relieve employment law, and relax NI reporting if you really want small businesses engaging'.

The objective is purely to catch the eye of journalists and get the business's brand name into print.



SECTION FOUR

COURTING THE JOURNALISTS



Start from the angle that all journalists want to be the one that everyone listens to and takes notice of.

Their success in their chosen field depends upon them covering good news stories, preferably exclusively, and being regarded as trusted, quality commentators, who know what they are 'talking' about.

By their very nature they are impatient for good stories, but they are equally impatient with people and businesses that try to get them to cover bad,

or even non-stories simply to help the business profile its brand.

So respect their position and help them achieve what they need to do, at the same time as cleverly positioning the business to win brand profile.

So, how should a business go about winning over the right commentators?

CREATING A DISTRIBUTION LIST

Firstly, look beyond the journalist, to the audience you are trying to influence. Which newspapers, magazines or online outlets do they follow? Whilst not a comprehensive exercise, Google can offer a shortcut for this simply through an 'articles on...' search. Alternatively, choose the top five or six outlets and research who contributes to them, bearing in mind that they may be freelance.

Most writers will include social media details such as their Twitter address at the end of the article. Follow them and comment positively on their article. They will take note of a following fan club and with luck will become a follower themselves. If they do, you have a direct line to your chosen journalists, and if you specifically want their attention, whenever you issue a press release or comment, use direct messaging.

Frequently their email address will be included in the article too. If not in the article, it may be listed in the publication elsewhere, with the telephone number.

If no contact details are provided, 'journalist listing' services are available which can provide details, but these come at a price.

The objective is to compile a list of key journalists so that when the business has a news release or comment to make, there is a ready-made list of recipients to distribute to.

■ *Section eight looks in more detail at building your distribution list.*



BUILDING MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS

- For a select few journalists who will be seen as real value for your business, set up Google Alerts and periodically retweet and share their articles on social media.
- Don't become a 'stalker', but be seen to be taking an interest in what they are writing and periodically compliment them.
- Very occasionally, a direct email or direct mail on Twitter commenting positively pays dividends.
- For a journalist who has responded to any approach or comment, if they are local, go as far as inviting them for a coffee. They are busy and will have both daily and weekly deadlines, so you will have to fall into their schedule, not them into yours, but they do have downtime, and will be equally keen to develop their sources of news as you will be to ensure that it's your business they see as a 'go-to source'.
- Some will reject you, and it's important not to get despondent. Even just one journalist seeing you as a regular contributor and spokesperson is a route to free, trusted, brand advertising.
- Make sure to keep your list up-to-date. Journalists move around, and if you want them covering you you are expected to know when they move, and to send them a good luck message.

GETTING THE TIMING RIGHT

- Gaining a journalist's confidence is all about timing. You are there to provide good content. If it is good content then the journalists will take it. If it is blatantly not good content, but merely a pitch for free advertising, then they will quickly cross you off their favourites list.
- Establish a rule that generic news releases are distributed to a broad list, and only send those that are genuinely 'interesting' to your 'shot' list in the first place.
- Once a good working relationship has been established with one particular journalist, offering an 'exclusive' ahead of any other journalists often secures a good article, but do accept that even if a journalist takes a release 'exclusively', it doesn't always mean that the editor will print it. If other news, more important than yours, is trending then that's what will receive the focus.
- Always make a comment on social media too whenever a release is sent out. That will catch the journalists who use that route to pick up content, as opposed to opening emails or watching news distribution feeds.

SECTION FIVE

POSITIONING NEWS RELEASES



You have about three seconds to capture the interest of a journalist, blogger or broadcast researcher. They get hundreds of emails and news feeds every day, and yours has to be the one that stands out.

In those three seconds, it has to fulfil a list of key points:

1. The right headline hook
2. A good initial summary
3. Evidence of a quote
4. Some facts
5. A good visual image

A good way to achieve the right initial structure is to use a template approach, from which the journalists can mentally tick the boxes quickly. Completing this requires a little thought, but should become almost automatic.

HEADLINE

This is probably the most important piece of the whole exercise. It is the one opportunity to intrigue the journalist, and is what drives the decision as to whether your release is worthy of more than three seconds' attention.

You have no more than 15 words to convince the journalist that this is for them.

Focus on four triggers:

1. Regional angle:

If you are looking for regional coverage, then refer to the area. 'Kent business sweeps the board at awards evening' for instance. This will immediately catch the eye of local journalists, but may well miss national coverage.

2. Subject pick-up:

If your focus is your sector or topic, looking for trade and subject pick-up, then refer specifically to it. 'Four super foods combine to combat insomnia' for instance.

3. Think keywords:

Export, jobs, health, diversity, economy, for instance, or, if it is relevant and not in any way open to libel challenge, use a famous person's name. Journalists will have different 'Google Alerts' set up for news stories that they are interested in, and will search for releases by key word.

4. Provocation, not boredom:

No one will pick up the headline: 'Travel firm appoints new Finance Director', but 'Money man adds spice to weekend breaks' may well catch a few eyes. As a general rule, don't be offensive and don't land yourself in court. Beyond that, be as edgy as you can to hook the reader.

Timing:

If you have been able to convince a journalist to take your release as 'exclusive', then you need to tell others that it is 'embargoed' until a certain time

Aside from embargoed releases, you need to set the time when you want your release to be distributed. There is an art to this.

Most journalists will not pick up releases at the end of the day, and by the following morning they are yesterday's news. Equally, first thing in the morning they will be trying to clear their email inbox, especially on a Monday morning. If it's truly 'breaking news', then 7am is fine; otherwise go for 10am onwards.

Some journalists will have their own target deadlines too. For instance, for the Sunday papers most journalists will have their columns scoped out by the previous Wednesday, and for monthly trade magazines deadlines will be weeks in advance. Consumer titles tend to have a three-month lead time.

If they are your target, then it is worth calling the editorial team and simply asking when the best time to submit content is.

CONTENT:

..... Presentation of this is important as, especially online, journalists may just copy and paste the whole content.

..... Copywriting services are available for those businesses without the time or in-house skills themselves.

The content itself is equally important though. There are four critical aspects to include:

1. A teaser:

Provided the journalist has got past the headline, the teaser is what will convince them to go to the next stage and actually read and use the release. It has to be factual and succinct, telling the journalist exactly what the release is about with a principal strapline.

2. Including facts, data or research:

What is it that is different? Is it news? Journalists need a reason to put you in their columns, and if there is nothing new or interesting for them to use, they will move on very quickly and consign your release to their junk box.

3. A clear story:

You should include four or five clearly set-out paragraphs telling the story, without waffle. These paragraphs should draw out the key elements that you want the reader to focus on.

Do bear in mind that this is the first time the journalist will have read it, so don't take for granted that they will know what you are talking about. Try and distance yourself from what you know and assume that the reader is completely fresh to the subject and content. Make it clear and well set-out.

4. Quotes:

Journalists are looking to print what experts and commentators have said, and this is the opportunity to ensure that both you and the business brand get a good name check. Only put in a quote that you would be happy to have associated with the business, and be quoted in full in the media. Assume that the journalist will use it word for word.

Try to have at least two quotes. One from the business, and a second from a recognised expert adding credibility to the release. The more highly recognised they are, the more likely it is that the release will be picked up. Using a local MP's name in a release, for example, will often trigger several Google Alerts that have been set up by journalists, so they will be prompted to read your release.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- > Include a short summary of the business and the website details.
- > Also list reference details for data and any research.

IMAGE:

- > Adding a strong, good-quality image will entice a journalist to use your article.
- > Make sure this is high resolution, is relevant, and has the permission of everyone in the image, and the owner of the image, for it to be used.
- > Try to discreetly include the brand name in the background.

CONTACT DETAILS:

- > If there are no contact details for journalists at the end of the release, don't be surprised if you hear nothing.
- > Include names, telephone numbers and email addresses, and be prepared to take a call at any time convenient to the journalist.
If you are not available, they will move swiftly to the next release and business on their to-do list.

SECTION SIX

RESPONDING TO EDITORIAL REQUESTS



Editorial requests fall into ad hoc work, answering the requests from journalists for case studies and quotes from spokespeople to add to the articles they are already writing, or at least planning.

There are two great advantages to responding to editorial requests:

1. You don't have to entice the journalist.
2. They are much quicker and easier to respond to.

You can either manage this yourself, or consider the value of an online subscription package designed for businesses wanting to receive editorial requests.

Start Up Loan recipients can take advantage of an exclusive offer of 25% off a monthly or annual subscription to JournoLink and save up to £75 p.a.



Full details are available at

<https://www.startuploans.co.uk/business-offers/journalink/>

But there are four golden rules to follow when you respond to an editorial request:

- 1 : Be brief, but give the journalist a good reason to follow up with you. Don't just respond 'I'm interested in talking to you'. The journalists may well have several businesses who have responded. They will first contact those who appear to offer the most. Your objective is to be the first one they contact. Remember though that they will not read more than a couple of paragraphs, so be relevant and succinct.
- 2 : Respond quickly. Often the journalist will be working to a tight timeframe, and they are more likely to look at, and contact, early respondents.
- 3 : Provide good contact details, including a telephone number and email address. Be ready to take their call or respond to an email at their convenience, not yours. It may well be that you have to get that order out in the next hour, but by then the journalist may well have moved onto the next business respondent.
- 4 : Provide a link to a good image in your response. That might just be enough to persuade them that you are the business they want.



SECTION SEVEN

DISTRIBUTING THE NEWS



Distributing the news release is the one area where a helping hand is generally needed.

The objective should be that each piece of news or comment will be seen by:

- > Trusted media commentators, both sector specific and general
- > Existing and potential customers
- > Social media audiences.

The release should also be retained for subsequent viewing:

- > By keyword search through an established search engine
- > On your business website for future viewing.

Distribution therefore breaks down into three channels:

- > Traditional journalists
- > Customer e-newsletters, and website media room updates
- > Social media commentators

1 Traditional journalists

For those businesses with the time and capacity to compile their own journalist lists and to send out individual or bulk emails, the do-it-yourself solution may work.

For small businesses though, the time spent doing this might be seen as unproductive or unfeasible, and a distribution service could come in useful.

There are two options:

- > Employing a PR Agency to do this as an outsourced service
- > Using an online web-based service.

Distribution is a key element of the overall strategy, and the target audience will already have been defined as part of the overall strategy.

Before pressing the 'distribute' button, go through the following press release template checklist to confirm you have filled all the criteria:

- > Headline
- > Timing
- > Content
- > Quotes
- > Notes
- > Image
- > Contact details

2 Existing customers

Keeping existing customers informed of business developments and news is often ignored, but it is a recognised fact that selling to existing satisfied customers is substantially easier than selling to new ones.

Updating existing customers is a very effective way of keeping in touch, and while this can be done through periodic newsletters, most businesses find it more efficient simply to email a current or segmented list of customers.

It is important, both for existing and potential customers, to ensure your website is updated each time a release is distributed. You can either do this yourself, or consider a press release distribution service that automatically updates the media room of your website whenever a release is 'posted' through it.

2 Social media commentators

For many businesses, the most important channel to be engaged in for attracting journalists' attention is Twitter.

You can do this yourself, or choose a release distribution service that will post your release on social media channels such as Twitter automatically when they send it to regular journalists. This will ensure that social commentators and journalists who lift news from Twitter, and who follow the chosen distribution service, see your headline and can access the release through a link on the tweet.

It is also becoming increasingly useful to post your news across your other social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. These are being used more and more in PR across a growing range of sectors.

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SECTION EIGHT

THE OUTPUT VALUE



Sviluppo Web
Creiamo siti Web di ogni genere. La personalizzazione e l'integrazione con funzionalità specifiche sono alla base di ogni nostro progetto.

SCOPRI

Assistenza tecnica
Installazioni e configurazioni sono all'ordine del giorno nelle aziende. Lo staff di CyberRabbit offre un servizio tecnico a 360 gradi.

SCOPRI

Design e grafica
L'illustrazione e la grafica sono al centro delle nostre idee innovative. Il nostro team è in grado di combinare il design con le funzionalità.

SCOPRI

Social Care
CyberRabbit aiuta le aziende nella realizzazione degli obiettivi di comunicazione con i loro clienti utilizzando al meglio i social network come strumento efficace.

SCOPRI

Businesses often obsess about what media coverage they get from PR, and how it should be valued. Don't, because there is no easy answer to this.

PR is part of an overall marketing mix. It should not necessarily be seen as an immediate route to large-scale media coverage, but more an ongoing tactic to capture the interest of trusted journalists and commentators so that, over time, the business is seen as a credible contributor to the news agenda. For this reason, commit to at least an annual PR strategy.

It's useful to track your coverage, which you can either do yourself or by subscribing to a full news cutting service, although these can be disproportionately expensive for start ups.

Keep track of which journalists are showing an interest in the releases so you can build relations. A distribution service can help you to assess whether the format and content of releases is catching the eye of journalists, or if the approach needs to be reviewed. If it is attracting coverage, stick to the game plan.

Bear in mind too that print journalism is declining, and whilst it might be novel to see the business mentioned in a newspaper, there is a growing value now in online coverage, which can be fairly easily tracked through Google Alerts without cost.

Online mentions have the added benefit of enhancing a business's SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), and increasing its ranking on key search engines.

SO, IN SUMMARY:

- > If you have marketing spend available, consider carefully where best to use it.
- > Track which journalists are showing an interest in you and build relationships with them.
- > Commit to an ongoing PR plan, set out for the year ahead.
- > Find the most economical service possible to help you in the key areas, and spend equally on advertising, PR and customer emails to deliver your overall marketing plan.

Start Up Loan recipients can take advantage of an exclusive offer of 25% off a monthly or annual subscription to JournoLink and save up to £75 p.a.



Full details are available at

<https://www.startuploans.co.uk/business-offers/journalink/>



SECTION NINE

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF A MEDIA INTERVIEW



When you see people performing well when being interviewed on the news, don't assume they are just good at it, most have been coached by an expert. There is no reason why every small business owner cannot be just as effective, and in many cases more effective.

There are two things to remember:

1. Make this your moment of fame and impact. It's your show, and make sure you run it.
2. The interviewer is actually under greater pressure than you. It's an interviewer's job to create a good broadcast, and to do that he or she needs a good, interesting and engaging interviewee. It's your job therefore to help the interviewer get a good output, whether that's in print, online, on the radio, or on the television.

So, at the same time as taking every opportunity to get over your message and mentioning your brand, you should be working hard to help the interviewer create a good outcome from their perspective too.

Your preparation should have four distinct elements:

AGENDA

- Write down why you are doing the interview. You must have a very clear objective. What do you want to achieve?
- Is this to promote your brand, or protect it? Or are you there as an expert in your field to add comments to trending news?
- This will dictate how you position yourself. Whether you will be in 'sales' mode or 'apologetic' mode. Whether you will lead the conversation, or whether you will allow the journalist to.
- In simple terms, what would be a good outcome for you from the interview? That's what you have to plan for.

AUDIENCE

- Who is your audience? It is important that you position what you are saying to the people who will be listening to you, or reading about you.
- What is their level of understanding of your product and area? Don't assume they know as much about it as you. If they do then use acronyms and technical phrases, but if they don't, you need to keep things in plain English and avoid complexities.
- Think about the difference between a Radio 4 audience and a local radio station audience, or a reader of The Times compared to a reader of a local newspaper. Each has a different reason for listening and reading, and each expects something different.
- Have a picture in your mind of who you are talking to, and do your best to maintain a conversation with that image in mind.
- The success of your interview and the impact you create will depend on how well you adapt to your audience.

MESSAGING

- See the interview as your opportunity to get your message over to your audience.
- Plan what message you want to land, and ideally break this down into no more than three points.
- At the outset of the interview, make these three points very briefly so that everyone knows what you are talking about.
- Then, as the interview progresses, concentrate on each point one by one, filling out the facts and detail of each one as you go.
- At the end of the interview, reinforce your three points and your message.
- Work out what quote you would like to see in the paper, or be taken as a sound bite in an interview, and say it several times.
- For a print interview, it often helps to have your preferred quote written out to give directly to the journalist. They will appreciate having your exact words as much as you will seeing them in the article.
- Have a good quality, high-resolution picture ready to provide to a print journalist too.

APPROACH

- Having thought about your agenda, your audience and your messaging, now reflect on the overall approach you are going to take.
- Think what you should wear to create the right impression.
- Think about the tone of your voice and the speed of your delivery.
- As a basic test, put yourself in the position of the audience. How would you expect to see the interviewee (i.e. you) performing?
- Make sure you have practised the way you want to deliver your three key points and your message. It is absolutely true that 'practice makes perfect', and those who you see and hear getting their messages over well will have put plenty of work in to prepare.

A FEW FINAL TIPS

- If there is a camera nearby, assume it is on you.
- If there is a microphone around, assume it is switched on.
- There is no such thing as an 'off-the-record' conversation with a journalist. In other words, don't get caught out unexpectedly.
- If you are on the television, being interviewed direct to camera, however weird it feels, talk directly to the lens. The audience will then see you speaking directly to them, not an anonymous person to your left or right.
- There is nothing worse than seeing a TV interviewee looking away from a camera. It makes them look disinterested, and the likely result is always the same - the loss of the audience's attention.
- If your interview is 'local', make sure you position yourself as 'local' too. Find out the name of the interviewer, and use it conversationally even if you are not sitting in front of them.
- Enjoy the experience. If you feel uncomfortable, that will come through, in print as much as it will on the television or the radio.
- Always remember that the interviewer is under greater pressure than you. And however you perform, everyone will say you did brilliantly.



SECTION TEN

WHERE TO GO FOR A HELPING HAND



Most businesses will need help in at least some areas of PR. Choosing which depends on existing in-house skills, time, and budget.

This guide has been put together by the Start Up Loans Company in conjunction with JournoLink, which is an online platform to help small businesses in those areas where they need that help.

JournoLink provides help with all the key aspects of managing your PR, from prompts on when and how to issue news content, to distributing that content to a whole range of journalists and bloggers, monitoring who is showing an interest in you, letting you know when journalists are looking for specific input and spokespeople for articles they are writing, and matching your content with the journalists most likely to cover you. Moreover, it has been built with the small business budget in mind.



START UP LOAN RECIPIENTS CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AN EXCLUSIVE OFFER OF 25% OFF A MONTHLY OR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION TO JOURNALINK AND SAVE UP TO £75 P.A.

OFFER DETAILS

JournoLink is the online PR (Public Relations) Platform for small businesses to manage their PR and get in the local and national media. JournoLink is offering Start Up Loan recipients 25% off their subscription either paid monthly or annually. That means you could have an all-round PR solution for as little as £150 for the year.

The subscription to JournoLink's services include:

- Premium Directory Listing
- Complete Access to PR Toolkit
- Events & Awards Calendar
- Enhanced Press Release Writing
- Discounted Professional Services

By redeeming this offer you will be able to send press releases, answer editorial requests, view your business calendar and learn about PR all from one easy to use online portal.

COMPANY DETAILS

JournoLink is an online PR toolkit that helps you get your business in the media. Whether you want to promote your product launch, announce your crowd funding campaign or comment on the latest industry stats, you can do it all through JournoLink. They have local, national and broadcast journalists from a broad range of industry sectors waiting to hear from you.

A subscription to JournoLink includes:

- **Go-to Directory** of business profiles for journalists to search and discover small businesses.
- **Send your Press Release** to a database of more than 6,000 journalists all tagged by industry and location so the right people are hearing your news.
- **SME Events Calendar** research all the key dates in your business calendar, when to apply for awards and attend networking events.
- **PR Top Tips and Knowledge Centre** offering in-depth articles on writing a press release, press releases, using social media and more.
- **Editorial Requests** sent via email allow journalists looking for specific quotes or comment to contact targeted businesses.
- **A Media Room**, filled with all of your previously distributed press releases, can be directly linked to your business website as a widget or plug-in.

If you're a small business looking to grow you should be harnessing the power of PR and JournoLink can help!

Disclaimer

You understand that in providing details of corporate offers The Start Up Loans Company is not endorsing any company, products or services other than its own and that you will be solely responsible for deciding whether to use or take up any of the products or services offered by any of the companies detailed here.



Full details are available at

<https://www.startuploans.co.uk/business-offers/journalink/>

START UP LOANS

Need finance and support for your start up? Start Up Loans could help.

The Start Up Loans scheme is a Government-backed initiative, created to help support start up business owners to access the funding and support they need in order to start or grow their own business in the UK.

Since its launch in 2012, the scheme has provided over £300 million of funding and supported more than 45,000 great business ideas.

Read below for more information about the scheme.

- ✓ Borrow £500 – £25,000
- ✓ Fixed interest rate of 6% p.a.
- ✓ 1 - 5 year loan repayment term
- ✓ Unsecured, personal loan for business purposes
- ✓ Free application support
- ✓ Free post-loan support and mentoring
- ✓ Free templates and guides
- ✓ No application or set-up fees
- ✓ No early repayment fees
- ✓ Exclusive business offers



“Mentoring was a brilliant element to the loan itself. Having a mentor through the start up process really helped.”

David O’Neal, Shortcuts Children’s Salon



“Start Up Loans give you the cash and the business support to make it work, it’s a complete package that can’t be beaten.”

Meriel Kehoe, Claudi & Fin

Ready to get started?

Register your interest today by visiting our website www.startuploans.co.uk and completing our short online form.

Looking for more information?

For more information about the Start Up Loans scheme, please visit our website or call our Customer Service team.

Web: www.startuploans.co.uk

Tel: 0344 264 2600 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm, excluding bank holidays).

Loans are strictly for 18s and over. Personal loans for business use only. Finance is subject to status. Terms and conditions apply.



HAVE A QUESTION? GET IN TOUCH
BY EMAIL OR PHONE:

E: hello@startuploans.co.uk

T: 0344 264 2600

(Mon to Fri 9.00am-6.00pm)

www.startuploans.co.uk

