

Welcome to the December issue of the PublicityShip newsletter.

This month:

- Do you fall into the Ego Trap?
- Three tips for SEO success (or What the heck is SEO anyway and why does it matter for my small business?)
- What's your next story?
- Hidden Jewel – how we created a story

Beware the Ego Trap

When sending out a news release, avoid the Ego Trap. Do you have a good story? A great hook? Does the campaign really feel like it's about you?

Well, time for a gentle reminder - its not about you, its about the editor. She wants to hear a damn good story that her readers will engage with easily. She wants a story that fits the editorial style and content range of her magazine or paper. She's not interested in promoting you - her job is to produce a publication that will sell.

When preparing your publicity campaign, avoid the ego trap by empathising with the editor. Focus on what's different about your service, and how it can benefit readers looking to solve a particular problem. Not just any readers - walk a mile in the editor's shoes, and think about his readers.

There's nothing wrong with having an ego, as long as it knows when to take a back seat and allow you to look at your story from the editor's perspective.

Search Engine Optimisation for small business: 3 tips for search success

Have you come across the Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) community yet? If you're online, you'll be wanting to understand more about this over time. So what is SEO and why does it matter for small business?

Once you are out on the web, you want searchers using Google, Yahoo and other search engines to be able to find you. And with so many businesses competing for attention, this task is becoming harder and harder.

SEO specialists help you rank better in organic search and paid search. But they can be expensive. So what can a small business do on their own?

Tip 1 - Blog. Google recently clarified exactly what search engines want: "... the good news is that the guidelines and tips about how Google crawls and indexes sites come down to wanting great content for our search results..."

So get online to acquire new clients with a blog, and use great content to enhance your search engine appeal!

Tip 2 - Use good page titles. Give each web page an accurate, distinct title . So rather than "XYZ Services", a title like "Changing A LightBulb For Fun and Profit - XYZ Services" gives readers (and search engines) a much clearer idea of what the page or post is about.

Tip 3 - Use friendly link names. Rather than www.myblog.com/?p=353, use www.myblog.com/finding-a-needle-in-a-haystack. This makes it easy for your readers, and easier for search engines to determine what the page is about.

Follow these 3 tips and you'll be more successful in attracting search engine traffic to your site.

What's your next story?

What have you been doing lately? Refurbishment? New product or service? Set up an online store? Held a special event?

Keep on the look-out for new stories and plan to send out a news release to your media distribution list three or four times a year.

The first story is the hardest, but once you have your list of media contacts, simply repeat the release-writing and distribution cycle whenever a new story comes your way.

The more often you do this, the greater your chance of coverage.

Where's your Hidden Jewel? How we created a story

Sometimes publicity is incidental, other times you have to do something newsworthy first.

We've worked creating our latest story: the first PublicityShip Hidden Jewel Awards, in partnership with AAT Kings, Channel Nine Postcards and Australian Traveller magazine. Within a month of launching the competition, we have received more than 150 entries and our website continues to light up with registrations, newsletter subscriptions and enquiries.

We created the Awards especially for small tourism businesses that offer a fascinating, appealing or unusual visitor experience - but remain relatively undiscovered. To enter or nominate an entrant, go to www.publicityship.com.au/hidden-jewel

Entrants are competing for a national prize that includes a major 12-month publicity campaign and a custom-built travel blog, with one-off publicity campaigns for state winners.

Regional tourism associations across the country have helped to spread news about the Awards via their newsletters and distribution lists. And we've

recorded coverage on radio and travel websites, with features set up when the winners are announced.

We aren't working with a large publicity budget, yet awareness among our target audience of small tourism businesses has grown exponentially with promise of more mainstream coverage to come.

How much do you estimate it would cost to run an advertising campaign with similar national reach getting right to your target audience?

The campaign is working well. We're not selling anything - we're giving something away that is of significant benefit to the tourism operators. This is an investment in building awareness of what we do in an important segment.

So if you're struggling for ideas about how to get publicity for your business, consider what your business might do to invest in creating something newsworthy. What would your Hidden Jewel look like? Let me know what you come up with!

Hope you have a great Christmas, and I'll catch you all again in the new year.

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About PublicityShip

PublicityShip helps small business get their story into the news and web. Publicity can be more effective than advertising and give an excellent return on investment. PublicityShip journalists help you uncover the most newsworthy aspects of your business and get your message to the right media contacts. And PublicityShip blogmasters help you attract and convert potential clients online.