

EVENT PUBLICITY: THE GOLD STANDARD





Introduction

Trade shows and exhibitions are still one of the most effective ways for your company to network with customers and prospects and strengthen its presence in the market place. It can also be one of your most expensive marketing tactics, therefore the pressure is on to get the most out of it.

When you signed up as an exhibitor you will have already decided how this fits into your marketing strategy. You will have established your KPIs and how you're going to measure success.

You will have clarity on the core message that you'll be promoting consistently throughout every aspect of your clearly defined event strategy i.e. your stand, marketing brochures, sales engagement, case studies, press releases, and social media activity.

Where do you start with your event publicity?

Our comprehensive guide helps you to maximise your event publicity opportunities and focus on the things that are important to drive results. With handy checklists to keep you on track and space to scribble down your creative thoughts, this guide will help you skyrocket your event publicity.

PRE-SHOW PLANNING

12 weeks to go...

First things first:

- Identify who the media sponsors/partners are.



- Find out who will be publishing show previews and confirm submission deadlines.

- Determine the press office contact and show photographer and make yourself known to them.

- Source the editorial calendars for your top 5 wish list publications and get your trusted highlighter out to clearly mark the opportunities that relate to your business.

PRE-SHOW PLANNING

10 weeks to go...

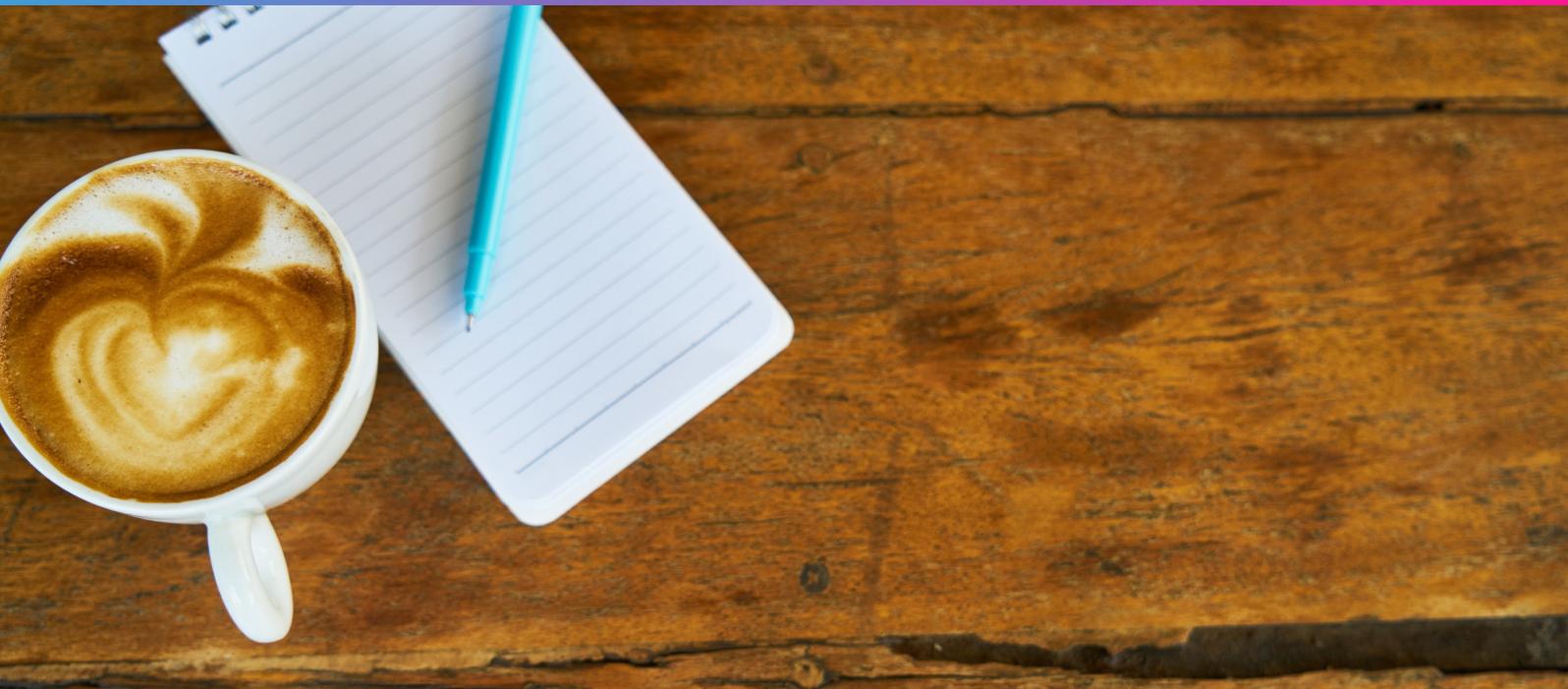
You need to:

- Craft your big media story – you may have identified what this is already. And, you may have more than one. If you're struggling, think about:
 - New products, services or technologies – make sure you focus on what problem you're trying to solve. By doing so, you will generate far greater interest with journalists.
 - Large, unusual or unexpected contract wins all make good news headlines.
 - Emerging or surprising market trends that your experts could comment on.

Failing that, have a chat with your Accounts team to see who you're invoicing – every invoice represents a customer story.



PRE-SHOW PLANNING



What journalists want

- Exclusivity.
- Stories on new projects.
- Information on new products or services which demonstrate uniqueness.
- Access to experts who are articulate and have a strong opinion.
- Good quality photography (at least 300 dpi) – high quality images provide a stronger opportunity for substantial column inches, as opposed to a NIB (News-In-Brief).

What journalists don't want!

- Irrelevant information: make sure your distribution list is targeted, updated regularly and sent to a named contact.
- Half the story: make sure you've provided all the information to make your story complete and interesting.
- You to phone them! Journalists do not want you to 'follow up' a press release; if they're interested, they'll get in touch.

PRE-SHOW PLANNING



Press release tips:

Before you put pen to paper, think about the following:

- Is my story news? i.e. is it something that hasn't been released to the press before and is it something relevant or useful to your target audiences?
- Have you secured third party permission to release the information?
- What is the hook that will engage the journalist?



- What are the key messages you want to convey? No more than 3.

1.

2.

3.

PRE-SHOW PLANNING

Press release tips:

So, you've answered the first questions and you're now ready to write the press release, but you have writer's block. Think about the 5 W's:

Who are you working with:



What difference have you made:

When did this take place:

Where did it happen:

Why should anyone take notice of this:

PRE-SHOW PLANNING

Press release tips:

Identify your story's angle:

Your angle must have the following three attributes: It's the most important fact in your story; it's timely and it's unique, newsworthy or contrary to industry norms and trends. Have a go here:

1.

2.

3.

Create a concise headline:

Use less than ten words. The title should clearly signpost the key point presented in the opening paragraph – focus on what problem you 'solved'. Jot down some ideas:

Possible headline #1:



Possible headline #2:

Write in the Third-Person:

A press release must be presented objectively. Refrain from expressing personal opinions unless in quotes.

Provide quotes that say something meaningful:

Journalists will use these to add an authoritative voice to their reports. Don't waste quotes with 'bland' statements – say something intelligent and analytical.

Don't forget your 'Notes to Editors' section.

Editors may want to follow up – make it easy for them.

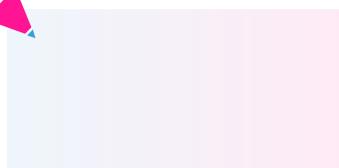
PRE-SHOW PLANNING

8 weeks to go...

Now it's time to think about who your spokespeople are going to be. These need to be authoritative they are communicating on behalf of the company after all. Keep these to a minimum to ensure consistency of message – an heir and a spare, and a back up, is perfectly fine!



Contender #1



(e.g. Chief Executive/
Managing Director)

Contender #2



(e.g. Technical Director)

Contender #3



(e.g. Head of Business
Development)

Once you've identified your spokespeople, you need to determine how comfortable they are with talking to the media. Having the confidence to handle media enquiries and interviews positively, to maintain control and achieve credibility with the target audience is not something that happens overnight.

Think about investing in a half day bespoke media training workshop. If there's no time or budget, then here's our quick 10 step guide to handling press interviews:
<http://bit.ly/ecprinterviews>

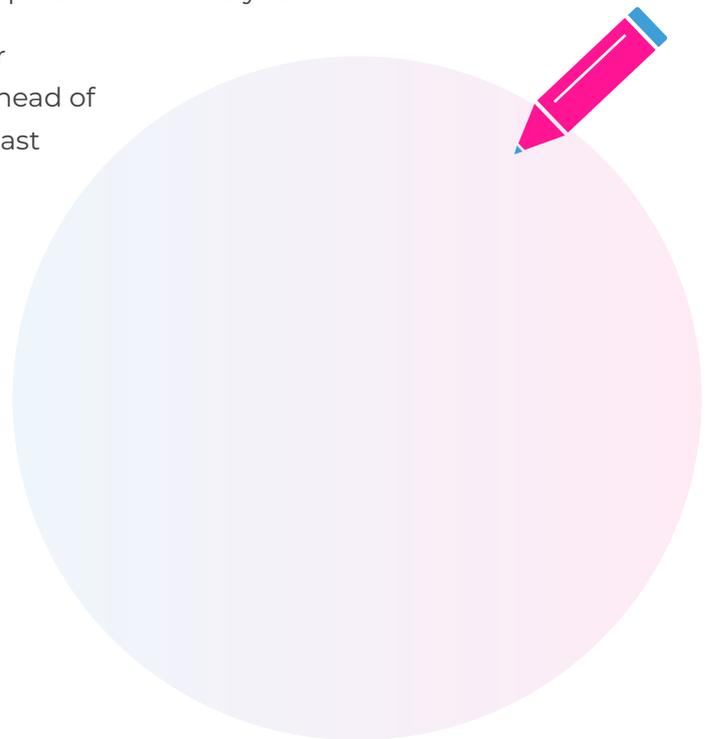


PRE-SHOW PLANNING

One week to go....

Make sure you:

- Send an email or pick up the phone to your target list of Editors and invite them for a coffee or to come to your stand for an interview with your subject matter experts.
- Schedule a follow-up email (or phone call) this week, in which you offer to schedule an appointment with your nominated spokesperson/spokespeople.
- Email the official event photographer and find out when he/she is available to come and photograph your stand – maybe you've got a contract signing or an 'official' launch you want to capture for future publicity.
- Check in with the Show Daily and find out if you can help them with any of their stories, offer subject matter experts for interview.
- Have your press pack printed and ready. Check it has everything journalists will need to know including your contact details, company information, why you're exhibiting and why it matters to the press, good quality images of your spokespeople, your products etc and your news.
- Social media – draft your tweets/LinkedIn posts ahead of schedule. You need at least three a day – morning, noon and evening – make sure you include the event hashtag in every update.



PRE-SHOW PLANNING

T-minus 2 days to go...

Network, Network, Network!

Confident or not, striking up a conversation with a complete stranger can be daunting but not if you embrace our five top tips:

1. Spend time thinking about your introduction/icebreaker:

This could be as simple as your name and what you do (see #2) followed up by simple open questions (see #5) – don't forget to smile!

2. Think outside the box:

Consider describing what you do in a more interesting way, for example, if you specialise in marine environmental protection, you could say that you are “the guardians of the deep”. This isn't about dumbing down what you do – it's about being more accessible and memorable and encouraging conversation.

3. Remember, it's not about you, it's about them:

Think about how you can put them at ease and make them feel more comfortable about asking questions – this will help you to manage your nerves too.

4. Every connection is potentially valuable:

Whether it's school children you could inspire, a politician you could influence, or a journalist you could educate, every interaction should be treated as an opportunity to practice being interesting and engaging.

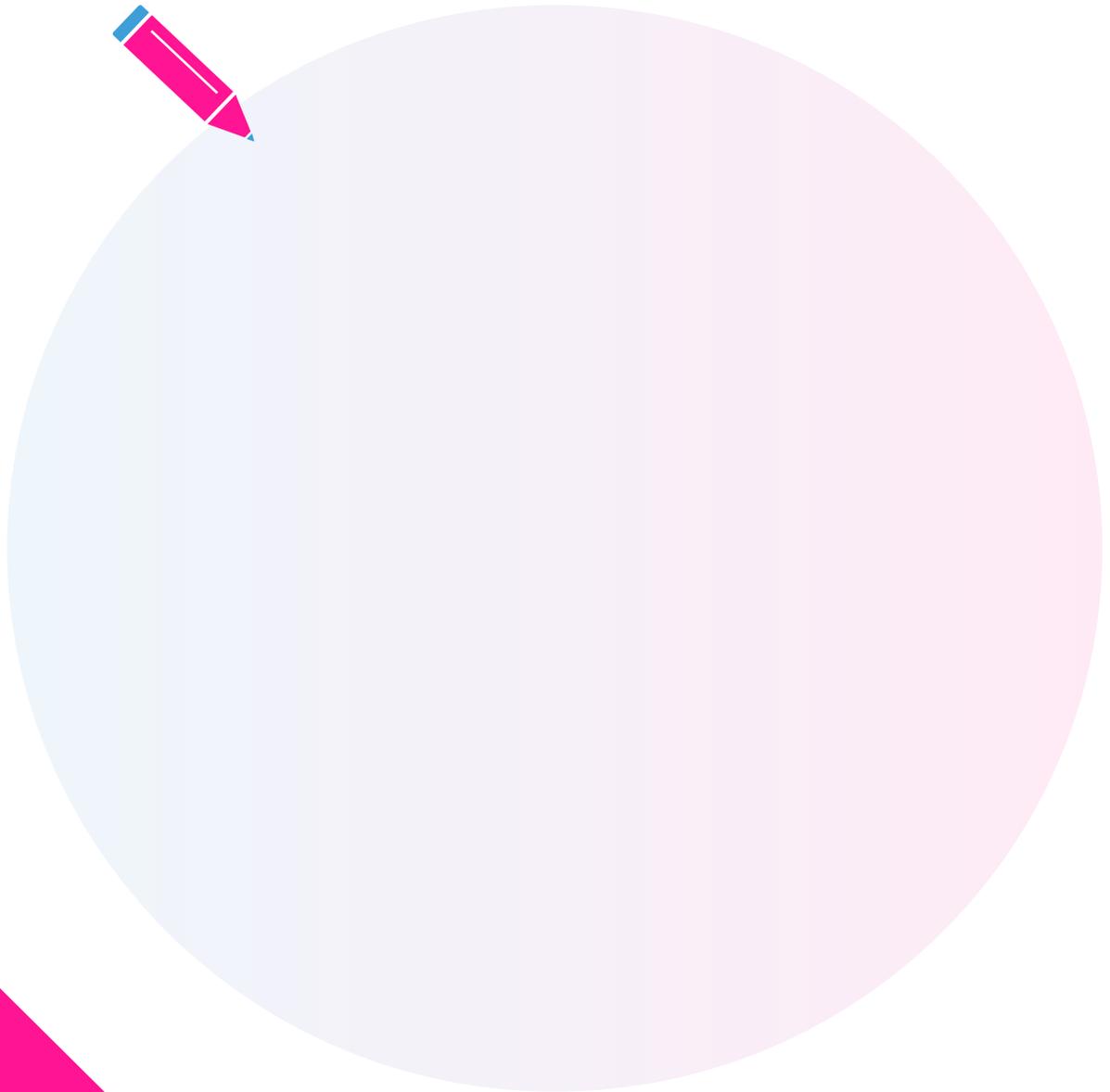
5. Prepare three questions:

Encourage engagement by preparing three open-ended questions which cover safe territory. For example, “who is winning the best freebie this year – is there anything really innovative here?” Or “What's the best freebie you ever received at a show?” This will give you some insight into the person and what they are interested in which will help you tailor your conversation.

DURING THE SHOW

Have you...

- Been to the press office to check your press pack material
- Posted your updated photos/updates to social media
- Re-tweeted any specific references to your company and shared via LinkedIn
- Thanked people who have mentioned your company/stand in updates and tweets



DURING THE SHOW

How to deal with those unexpected visitors

If a journalist happens to come by the stand unexpectedly, there's no need to panic. Three key things to remember:

1. Give yourself time to prepare:

It's ok to say to the journalist "now is not a good time and could you come back in 5/10 minutes or later in the day". Ask the journalist what he/she is looking to discuss – that way you will have some time to think through what you or the subject matter expert need to say, particularly in response to tricky and sensitive issues.



2. Have something worthwhile to say:

If there are controversial or sensitive issues in your area of expertise, work out where you stand and don't be afraid to air those views – but make sure you can back them up. Journalists are looking for experts who are prepared to give a strong opinion. If your company prefers not to comment on such issues that's fine, but don't be surprised if the reporters don't bother to call you again.

3. Make it interesting and relevant:

Avoid talking theoretically – use tangible examples to bring your points to reality. You will come across much more authoritative. And, don't get obsessed with your own internal messages – by all means weave them in to the conversation, but be selective and thoughtful to keep them relevant.



POST SHOW ACTIVITY

The attendees have left and the doors on your event are firmly closed. Now, it's time to relax with a well-earned cuppa and some tasty biscuits. Don't get too comfortable though – just because your event is over doesn't mean you can simply walk away! There are still some key post-event activities you can be doing to keep the momentum going and continue to maximise your investment.

Make sure you...

- Follow up with the journalists you and the team met and simply thank them for taking the time to meet with you and the team. If you promised them additional material, then make sure you send it through a few days after the show with suitable high res photography.
- You should have a clear idea as to what your wish list publications are covering in the next 3 months. Determine what contribution your company can provide and contact the Editor to discuss further, offering written contribution or an interview with the subject matter expert
- Think about providing your own brief account of the event – what surprised you, what was good, bad or indifferent and send this to your key media contacts as they are likely to be putting together their own review of the show.
- Ask your subject matter experts to write a short blog about their experiences of the event. Not only will this generate additional content that could attract visitors to the next event you attend, it will also be beneficial for your SEO and social media strategy.
- Most importantly, celebrate! Delivering an effective event publicity strategy can be a long and arduous journey so make sure you bring together the whole team to celebrate and appreciate all of the hard work that's gone into it.



If you follow this guide, you can make a 3 day event last 6 months. But, if you're struggling to find the time, then give us a call and we can do it for you – guaranteed performance.



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