

Public Relations

FOR

DUMMIES®

2ND EDITION

**by Eric Yaverbaum with Robert Bly
and Ilise Benun**

Foreword by Richard Kirshenbaum



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Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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Dedication

To Wylie — you're always with us all.

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Foreword

Many years ago, when Jon Bond and I first started our agency, Kirshenbaum Bond & Partners, we launched our agency with one simple ad for Kenneth Cole that stated “Imelda Marcos bought 2700 pairs of shoes. She could have at least had the courtesy to buy a pair of ours.” The resulting press and word of mouth taught us an important lesson early on: Create attention. Create a story that captures the public’s interest and it could translate into millions of dollars of free press for your client or your own brand. This simple formula helped put our client and agency on the map to fame and fortune. And who can complain about that?

We actually invented a term called *the multiplier effect* because the resulting press attention actually multiplied the client’s ad budget, making a few million look ten times larger.

While some, we’ve heard, argue the PR is all about finding a gimmick, there’s nothing gimmicky about creating a famous brand, helping to mold a positive image, or resulting dollars to the bottom line. However, generally good PR is much, much more than just coming up with a one-shot story. Having a proper PR plan, doing targeted PR outreach, and having good press relations can make or break a company’s image in the long run.

In fact, we were such big believers in the power of PR that in addition to our ad agency, we also created a PR & Promotions company called LIME, which has become a well-known PR practitioner who always delivers on out-of-the-box PR events and strategies.

When my dear friend and colleague, Eric Yaverbaum, asked me to write a foreword for this book, I was delighted to help him — not only because he’s smart, charming, and has run a terribly successful PR business for the last 20 years, but because it’s good PR for me and KBP as well.

In fact, Public Relations at its core is exactly that, the relations you or your company have with the public. Hopefully, I have in a few short paragraphs helped relate to you the important ad power of PR. After all, if you’ve ever bought a pair of Kenneth Cole shoes, a Coach bag, drank a Snapple or a glass of Moet & Chandon, have shopped at Target, used a Citibank American Advantage Card, used Jergens to keep your skin beautiful or Ban deodorant to keep you smelling good, had a sip of Hennessy or fed your cat Meow Mix

or ever flown on Song Airlines, you've most likely seen or heard some of our potent PR strategies and advertising. Enjoy this work and remember my golden rule:

The only bad PR is the PR you don't control.

Richard Kirshenbaum
Co-Chairman
Kirshenbaum Bond + Partners

Introduction

Whoever you are, wherever you are, public relations makes a difference in your life — believe it or not.

If you're a small-business owner or manager or a wannabe entrepreneur, PR helps level the playing field between you and your bigger, wealthier competitors. You may not be able to afford a 60-second commercial during the Super Bowl, but if you offer a free session at your health club to people who come in *during* the Super Bowl, you can get front-page publicity based on your PR event.

If you're a corporate manager or executive, you've seen ad budgets decline while ad costs skyrocket. With an effective public relations program, you can communicate with your target market *more* often, not less, without increasing ad spending.

And if you're a consumer, public relations plays a role in your education and the formation of your opinions without your even being aware of it. Did you know that half or more of everything you read, see, and hear in the media was put there through the actions of a public relations manager or a PR firm? PR has an enormous effect on the information you get every day of your life.

I wrote *Public Relations For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, precisely because I know that there is no magic to PR and that do-it-yourself is not only viable but also sensible for many businesses. What Wilford Brimley says about Quaker Oats applies equally to doing your own PR for many readers of this book: "It's the right thing to do." And just as eating Quaker Oats is "the right thing to do" when it comes to nutrition at breakfast, *Public Relations For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, shows all you PR do-it-yourselfers out there "the right way to do it."



The key to getting media coverage is to offer them a story that they can't resist. The two key elements are an understanding of the marketing message and the ability to think creatively in terms of PR campaigns. You already understand your business's market, and I am convinced that, with enough practice, almost anyone can learn to think more creatively. The mechanics of PR — and a lot of sample campaigns to inspire you — are laid out in this book. So you already have everything you need to do your own PR, and you don't need to hire an agency if you don't want to.

About This Book

You can think of *Public Relations For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, as “your PR agency in a box.” This book gives you all the tools you need to do your own PR — ideas, checklists, forms, documents, and resources — are in your hands right now, presented in a clear, easy-to-use package. With this book, you can get your product or service featured whenever and wherever you want — in newspapers, magazines, and trade journals; on TV, radio, and the Web — so that people find out about what you are offering and come to you to buy it. The result? More fame, recognition, awareness, inquiries, orders, sales — and money!

Can you do your own PR? Yes. Thousands of small- and medium-sized businesses conduct very successful PR campaigns every day, for pennies on the dollar compared to what they’d pay for a similar amount of advertising. Large corporations also are doing an increasing amount of PR in-house. This book is written to help you succeed on your own. You don’t need me, my PR agency, or any other PR agency, if you’re willing to put in the effort and follow the simple guidelines presented in *Public Relations For Dummies*, 2nd Edition.

You can read through *Public Relations For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, start to finish, or you can start with the chapters that interest you most. It’s up to you.

If you want to see quick, immediate results, go to Chapter 8. Follow the press-release strategies presented there, and write a release for your own product following the sample in the chapter. Then distribute the press release to the media by using one of the publicity outlet resources listed in the Appendix, and follow up according to the guidelines in Chapters 11 and 12. The press release is one of the fastest, easiest techniques in this book, and you’ll see results fast. I like that because you receive tangible proof that PR works — in the form of press clippings.

My hope is that your newfound enthusiasm for the PR process spurs you to try more and more of the ideas and strategies presented throughout *Public Relations For Dummies*, 2nd Edition. When you do, you’ll magnify your results, make your company famous, and get more business than you can handle. What a nice problem to have!

Conventions Used in This Book

To make navigating this book easier, I use the following conventions:

- ✓ *Italic* text emphasizes and highlights new words and terms that I define in the text.
- ✓ **Boldfaced** text indicates keywords in bulleted lists or the action parts of numbered steps.

- ✔ Monofont is used for Web addresses.
- ✔ Sidebars are shaded gray boxes that contain text that's interesting to know but not necessarily critical to your understanding of the chapter or topic.

Foolish Assumptions

Whether you want to put out a single press release to announce your grand opening, or plan an ongoing PR campaign, I made the following assumptions about you as I wrote this book:

- ✔ You may plan on keeping your product name in the public eye for many years to come through your own efforts.
- ✔ You may prefer to have someone do your PR for you.
- ✔ You may have a big budget and special contacts with the media.
- ✔ You may have a special budget and no contacts with the media.
- ✔ You may have little or no experience.
- ✔ You may have substantial experience.
- ✔ You have a telephone, a desk, a word processor, and your wits — this book supplies most of the rest or tells you where to get it.

How This Book Is Organized

The *For Dummies* series was conceived as books for smart people who are absolute beginners, and that's the approach I use in *Public Relations For Dummies*, 2nd Edition. Part I covers the basics. Part II discusses the process we use to create successful PR campaigns. Part III covers the PR materials you need and how to create them. In Part IV, you discover how to work with the media to get your material published. Part V gives you power techniques for getting the media to notice and cover you. And Part VI is a collection of useful tips. The appendix gives you a list of useful resources.

A detailed breakdown of each part follows.

Part I: PR: What It Is, How It Works

Everybody has heard of PR but surprisingly few people have a clear picture of what it really is and what it involves. Part I supplies the big-picture overview of the public relations field. Chapter 1 defines what public relations is and

how it fits into an overall marketing campaign. Chapter 2 examines PR uses and applications, answering the questions “Who needs PR?” and “How can it benefit me and my company?” Chapter 3 deals with the “make or buy” issue: Should you always do your own PR, or does it ever make sense to hire outside help? It also covers the alternatives available (PR firms, ad agencies, graphic design services, and freelancers), including where to find them and how to evaluate and hire them.

Part II: Brainstorming and Thinking Creatively

PR is largely a business of creative ideas, and this part shows you how to think more creatively about PR and come up with breakthrough ideas that make your product or service stand out and get media attention. In Chapter 4, I show you how to set up your own in-house PR capabilities, so you can do just what the big PR agencies do, only without the big PR agency bills. Chapter 5 gives you techniques for producing PR ideas. Chapter 6 is my arsenal of PR “weapons” — tactics used with extraordinary success to publicize my firm’s clients.

Part III: Putting the Wheels in Motion

Sitting around cooking up ideas for PR campaigns is fun, but a lot of hard work is involved in turning the plans into a working campaign that gets your name in the papers and your company on the evening news in a favorable light. Chapter 7 covers the details of setting up that workhorse of PR programs, the company newsletter. In Chapter 8, you see how to churn out press releases and media kits. Chapter 9 explores writing and placing feature articles. And Chapter 10 shows you how to deliver your message in person with confidence and persuasiveness at interviews, press conferences, media tours, and other presentations.

Part IV: Choosing the Right Medium for Your Message

The ideas you come up with and the PR materials you produce won’t generate one thin dime of extra revenues or profits if you don’t get the media to run them. Part IV shows you how to pitch your ideas to the media so that you get the coverage you want. Chapters 11 and 12 give you a crash course on how to deal with media types effectively. Chapters 13 through 17 focus on specific media: radio, TV, print, the Internet, and new technology like blogs, webcasting, and podcasting.