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### **Public Relations as a Promotional Tool**

Some have defined Public Relations as “free advertising”. This is a misnomer in that it takes money to manage a successful PR campaign, and unlike advertising, not every message that you want to convey gets exposure. Ads are a means by which companies convey a specific message to their market. This can be achieved by purchasing ad space in various forms of media. By purchasing this space, the company is assured that the information they wish to release to the market will be presented exactly as they desire.

Conversely, PR has no guarantees that information will be conveyed. As a promotional tool, PR is more of a notification to various media outlets of corporate activities, products, or services. This notification usually takes the form of press releases. There are numerous reasons that a media outlet will “run” a particular story. In some instances, the publisher may have an interest in your story, the story may dovetail on other stories currently being run, or it may just be a slow news day. Additionally, even if a particular media outlet runs your story, it may not be exactly as you had desired. The publisher may only run a portion of your release, or utilize only small segments for context to a larger story, or they may provide counterpoint to your position. Either way, the company does not control the use of the information. That is why it is crucial to have a solid press release, and equally as important, someone who is dedicated to following up person-to-person.

So why if the company doesn’t control it, it is not guaranteed and other messages can be conveyed along with yours would a company choose PR as part of its’ promotional strategy? Utilizing PR as a promotional tool is an inexpensive way raise market awareness. It also gives the appearance of third party validation of the information. For example, if a company creates an ad, the consumer usually realizes that the ad is designed to give the most positive view to that company. But if an article is written in a newspaper or trade journal, this gives the consumer information from someone on the outside or a third party endorsement. A message received from a perceived expert can have equal if not greater impact than an ad in the eyes of a consumer. In addition, you become know to the editors and the news directors as an “industry expert” they can rely on to enhance future stories.

To get started on a PR campaign, the company should first look at its other promotions. If a company is advertising, those outlets should be targeted for the PR campaign. If the company is not advertising, then the marketing plan should be reviewed to determine the target market, and then link the media outlets to those markets. The key to the success of this campaign is to have something that is newsworthy. This could be a major trade show, a large contract, an exclusive line, a successful year, etc. It is important not to flood the PR network with frivolous information.

It is important to note that PR can be an effective tool, but is not a replacement of other forms of promotion. For some companies, PR is a place to start an overall promotion strategy. Yet for others it plays more of a complimentary role.

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*Z promotion & design* has developed a Public Relations program exclusively for the Kitchen and Bath Industry. The program has been designed to provide an affordable solution to everyone, regardless of their market size.

**Description of Program:**

Your program will be tailored to the geographic area you request (based on local TV markets), plus a certain number of national outlets as follows:

<b>Local</b>	<b>National</b>
Newspapers	Design Magazines
Lifestyle / Design Magazines	Lifestyle Magazines
TV Stations (with news departments)	Broadcast Networks
News/Talk Radio Stations	Appropriate Cable Networks
additional sources can be added upon request	

*Z promotion & design* will provide the following services:

- work with you to customize a public relations plan designed to meet your goals
- customize the list of media for you, as indicated above
- write each release, with client approval prior to dissemination
- disseminate each release according to schedule, or as required via email or fax
  - USPS where necessary (i.e. videotapes, samples, etc.).
- follow up with the media
- provide you with a follow-up report
  - We cannot guarantee any release will generate a story, or that published stories will take the tone you want.

*Z promotion & design* can set up a clipping service at an additional cost