

Affluence Public Relations

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Specialist Public Relations
for Retail and F&B



TIPS ON GETTING THE MOST PR FOR YOUR BUSINESS

10 TIPS YOU CAN IMPLEMENT
TODAY TO INCREASE YOUR
AWARENESS AND SALES

Elegance

Indulgence

Intelligence

Influence

PLAN YOUR AWARENESS CAMPAIGN EARLY

You can't do good PR with too hurried a timeline. Newspapers generally plan for their event pages weeks in advance and if you want a nice feature piece, you need to give the journalist time to plan for the story. Magazines may take up to 3 months to feature the write up – from interview to writing, design to layout, printing and dissemination - all these processes need time and the deadlines in the production process are pretty fixed.

If you intend to do a media event or run a public PR campaign, you need plenty of time to plan and execute these well.

As a good general rule-of-thumb, your PR campaign should be up and ready to be executed at least 3 months before your restaurant's exciting official opening day.

LEVERAGE THE REACH OF THE MEDIA

The best and most cost effective way to get awareness going for your restaurant is to leverage the reach of the media, which can help you influence up to 100,000 readers at a go if done right. Be aware of the circulation figures of the media you wish to target as this will help you gauge its approximate reach.

This is particularly helpful for restaurants located in places that do not naturally have a high traffic of people passing by or in places that are not populated with other restaurants. Read more in the case study below!



CASE STUDY OF BONIFACIO

Bonifacio was the first authentic Filipino restaurant in Singapore that catered to Filipino professionals working here. Located in the Kreta Ayer area (which is not a traditional place for a restaurant to be located in), it did not enjoy a high natural flow of its target audience passing by. As such, we had to help boost its profile and the public's awareness of its presence through PR, specifically leveraging the reach of the media to reach more people. In place of traditional advertising to up the restaurant's profile, which would have cost at least \$30,000 for a suitable ad campaign – PR was used to great efficacy to publicise the opening. We managed to help garner more than \$100,000 in media value for Bonifacio, with coverage of the restaurant in almost all the major newspapers in Singapore. As proof of the PR campaign's effectiveness, there was a queue of customers who patronised the restaurant on its opening day!

CONSOLIDATE AND UPKEEP A MEDIA DATABASE

Your database should include contact details of the media's newsdesk, specific journalists who you know cover your area of interest, and how much leadtime the particular media / journalist needs for a feature or article to be done. If done properly, the media database should facilitate the PR process since you can rely on it for your planning purposes. This database should also be maintained and updated regularly for it to serve its full purpose. Whenever you read a new magazine that covers your area or when you come across a new journalist who has written an article about your industry, these should go into this master database. Browsing news sites on the Internet will also expose you to even more writers who write relevant articles, so this should go into your database as well.

Also, when you reach out to a journalist on your list who no longer writes for the publication or has changed his/her area of coverage, you should take the time to remove the name so your list is always current. Especially for online journalists, where new media sites are always popping up and replacing old popular ones and things move in hyper speed on the Net. Things like these take time but are really useful when planning for effective PR.

ONE SHOT ONE KILL

If you write a press release that is convoluted, the media may not pick it up – and it may decrease your brand perception, so it is important to get this right the first time. Be meticulous in ensuring that you provide all the right details at the time of sending out your press release or doing your pitch to avoid having to resend information or correct journalists who are interested. Leave out jargon and any unnecessary details that do not add to the value of the story as they just make the release look more complicated than it should be.



CASE STUDY OF ANTIOXIDANT SPA

Prior to engaging a PR agency to help run their PR campaign, Antioxidant Spa was handling their own PR efforts for two years with little success. Their press releases were too full of unimportant details and self-centred, which made it uninteresting to the editors and journalists at first sight. Furthermore, this is a spa that offered alternative healing methods - which generally do not get a lot of mainstream coverage due to the lack of hard evidence for the treatments. When we were engaged to do the PR for them, we revamped the style of the press releases and made it straight-up about the benefits to the reader. We had also invited reporters and editors to try the treatments for themselves so that they would experience first-hand the benefits. This worked very well, as the press release that we had sent out garnered interest from 10 media including The Straits Times.

THE MAIN IDEA OF YOUR PITCH SHOULD BE SUCCINCTLY WORDED IN ONE SENTENCE

Journalists don't have a lot of time to read through paragraphs of a press release before they uncover the main message of your pitch. Make it easy for them to want to cover your story concisely saying what you need to say in a single clever sentence. This should be the headline for it to grab maximum attention. Also remember to ask yourself the all-important question when planning your message: "Why should the reader care about this?" After all, journalists write stories that meet their audience's needs.

Before crafting your press release, spend some time writing what your restaurant is about in as sharp and sweet a sentence as you can. You should be able to do this in just one simple sentence such that even people who are not in the F&B industry can understand what your unique restaurant concept is all about.

It would also help tremendously if you know what is trending in the industry and hook journalists into wanting to feature your restaurant by angling your pitch to relate to what's hot in the news. For extra PR leverage, you can tie in with large scale events happening in Singapore such as Epicurean Market and the Formula 1 races, festive celebrations such as Christmas or the New Year, or special occasions such as Halloween. Just be sure not to force this if there isn't a natural fit.



HAVE USEFUL ACCOMPANYING ASSETS READY.

Feature stories are very rarely done with just text. They often are accompanied by photographs or visuals. Have these ready when doing your pitching and make them readily available to journalists if they require these. Make sure that they are of a high enough resolution or good enough quality for their needs (whether they are for online display or colour printing). Other such items may include relevant statistics or figures that you can share. You can include these into a CD-rom along with a factsheet you have prepared in your press kit so that the reporter has all the information he/she needs at his/her fingertips.



Some other assets that may not be as conventional as those mentioned above may be suitable interviewees to accompany the story you have in mind. Such interviewees could be customers who have something interesting to say about your restaurant, a high profile fan like a well-known food critic or chef, a customer who loves your restaurant so much that he/she frequents it at least once every two days, or a family who enjoys the food so much that your restaurant has become the family restaurant for all the special occasions. Regardless of who you have in mind, you will need to ask them beforehand if they are willing to be interviewed, and pre-empt them of the possibility. Having such interview subjects lined up would help in the overall packaging of your story to the reporter and would help secure even more PR if the reporter bites since it does make his/her job a lot easier.

Remember that journalists are people too and that sometimes, getting the PR you want may require you helping these folks with their job as best you can.





TARGET SPECIFIC MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS AND CUSTOMIZE YOUR PITCH TO THEIR INTERESTS

It's human nature to prefer personalised communications over those perceived to be done in a group blast. As mentioned in point 6 above, journalists are people too! So, if you want a particular person to write a piece on you, spend the time to customise your pitch to his/her specific area of interest and the audience he/she writes for. Read what he/she has written in the past for an understanding of his/her style and pet interests. This takes effort but is ultimately worth it in the long run, as you need to cultivate good relationships as well for longer term PR plans. Which brings us to the next point...

SPEND TIME UNDERSTANDING THE NEWS, EDITORS, JOURNALISTS AND PUBLICATIONS THAT COVER YOUR AREA OF INTEREST.

This one requires a lot of time and effort but it will bear fruit in gaining PR mileage. You need to spend time reading publications and browsing websites that specialise in your industry, to keep abreast of current news and trends and also to familiarise yourself with the journalists and their editors who write the relevant stories. Different publications also reach out to different audiences so you need to understand who they are meant for so that you can customise your pitches to meet the publication's needs, for effective PR efforts. You need to keep reading and watching current media, as news waits for no one and journalists are also on the move from time to time.

REMEMBER TO INCLUDE A CALL TO ACTION.

Press releases or pitches that contain a call to action do a lot better in terms of PR because passive releases or pitches tend to get ignored. After all, the end story is for a specific audience and their benefit, and what better way to ramp up participation than with a call to action? If you have a calendar of events that are open to the public, share this with the media to up your PR space. These events can be workshops, unveiling of dishes, tasting sessions - they don't have to be major ones.

By asking your audience to do something, you're actually building on the momentum of the PR garnered from the article, as you're creating even more conversations and actions about your restaurant outside of the article.

IF YOUR PITCH CONTAINS ELEMENTS THAT ARE EASY TO SHARE ON ONLINE MEDIA, IT'S A BONUS!

With lots of media having an online presence now, one smart way of getting even more PR mileage is through content that can be shared and enjoyed in the digital realm. Make it easy for editors to want to cover your restaurant by providing short videos of behind-the-scenes peeks into the kitchen, a fun quiz, or some attractive infographics. All these help them reduce their time spent on content creation and help you get more PR since you're making it easier for them to write about you in their publication. These are also great to share on social media, which is where buzz is spread and news goes viral - which, as you guessed it, gives you even more PR that way! The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge is a great example of this: the clips are easy to share on social media, and the Challenge quickly went viral as more and more people shared their videos.

BONUS TIP!

GET A PR AGENCY TO DO THE PR CAMPAIGN FOR YOUR RESTAURANT.

Getting a PR agency to do the PR for your restaurant may not seem to be the smart thing to do, especially since we have already given you these 10 awesome tips on doing your own PR! But often-time, it makes more sense to engage the PR experts to run your PR campaign for you. Here are three often over-looked reasons why you should.



1. From experience, media outlets seem to prefer working with PR agencies for their stories, because we know how best to package the information for the reporters. This is our business and we know what reporters are looking for, so we are often able to pre-empt their requirements even before they ask for them. This makes writing the story a lot quicker, since what the reporter needs is already prepared and ready to go to them if they so require. PR agencies often respond a lot more quickly to press queries, since this is what we are engaged for: to handle the media on your behalf.

2. Having a PR agency represent you actually increases perception of your brand credibility! It makes it seem that if you go through the effort of engaging a PR agency to run your PR campaigns for your restaurant, you're serious about making your restaurant work in the long run. In the world of the media, such perceptions often play a large role in securing wider coverage. This is as the media do not want to waste time and space on an operation that could turn out to be a fly-by-night joint.

3. Unless you are a large MNC with a department devoted to public relations, chances are that it's all hands on board for SMEs whose staff often have to multi-task and do a bit of everything. Getting a PR agency to run PR campaigns and engage reporters would make sense for an SME since it frees the staff up from having to look into this and you get PR experts to help you come up with a PR plan that will be bang for your buck.





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