



## **Today's news can provide publicity opportunities - by Stanley Hurwitz**

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Public relations is about getting noticed. And getting attention in the increasingly crowded world of traditional print, online and broadcast media, social media, blogs, etc., is increasingly difficult. That means you need novel ways to make your product or service stand out from the crowd.

“Yes,” you say, “but I’ve already tried every angle.” You sent out news releases and emails, and posted on Facebook and Twitter announcing that you have a new product or staff member, opened a new office, sold a building, won an award, launched a new website. But sometimes the best solution is right in front of your nose. Every day there’s something in the news that you can piggyback on or coat-tail with. Finding a clever way to connect something about your business with today’s headlines is a great way to grab attention. Coat-tailing can leverage today’s news or even an old story, give it a new twist, using it to create and enrich your brand’s story.

It can make your company seem more relevant or more important and at the leading edge in its industry. News coat-tailing improves your chances of catching the attention of a news editor or program director.

Remember: The media are not interested in you or your product. They care whether your story will interest their readers or viewers. Since a business owner is busy running the company, the job of knowing what’s in the news and developing piggybacking ideas should be turned over to a creative and experienced PR pro, whether in-house or a consultant.

Here are a few examples of how one public relations pro (me!) made current events relatable to his clients:

During National Safety Awareness Month, I developed a news story for an orthodontic practice that called attention to the large number of childhood sports injuries each year (3.5 million) and the orthodontist's advice "to protect your body, mouth and face—no matter your age and whether you wear braces or not."

When a commercial real estate client leased space to a new anchor tenant at a retail plaza, my story angle focused, not only on the new store, but also on the landlord's long history in the community, how they maintained 100% occupancy, and demonstrated plans to stay by investing \$1 million in plaza upgrades.

Last year, when it was big news that travel was opening up to Cuba, I created a story for a travel agent client – after she participated in a very early visit by an American travel agent group, and that her experience and contacts would help her plan educational/cultural trips for travelers.

After there was a court ruling that truckers may be required to undergo sleep tests, I created a news story for a client about their expertise working with people diagnosed with sleep apnea.

Starting today, pay closer attention to the news – whatever your source for 'real' news – and think how you could piggyback or coat-tail on that to call attention to what you do. Better yet, ask a proven public relations pro to help you create buzz to build your brand!

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