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Be original to attract eyeballs - and customers attached to them - by Stanley Hurwitz

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Not that your company is as big as Netflix (yet!), but a story last year in the Boston Globe caught my attention: Netflix has 137 million subscribers around the world, but it had to raise monthly subscription rates by one dollar (That's monthly added revenue of \$137 million!) in order to compete with the other networks producing quality new content – such as Disney, FX and Amazon.

There were about 495 scripted TV shows produced in the U. S. last year. To compete, Netflix had to produce 100 original TV series. Netflix couldn't hope to build an image as a serious global media giant if it only streamed reruns and Hollywood 'B' movies. Original shows like "House of Cards" and "Orange Is The New Black" helped boost their image, but it's only a start.

A media analyst, commenting on the projected new program-production costs, said, "A spending binge for Netflix is not an option. If they want to grow, they need original content. Better shows are the only defense against that kind of competition. Someone has to pay for them." (Hint: us)

So what does all of this have to do with you? In the 1970s, the average American was exposed to about 500 ads per day. Today, from all sources, each of us is bombarded daily with 1,000 ads. The trick is to make your product stand out from the crowd.

Attracting attention is easy if you're the only one selling a new generation of cell phones marketed by one of the giant monopolies. But if you're one of 50 dental practices in a certain area you need to differentiate yourself to stand out. After all, they all fix teeth, right? Maybe you promote evening hours!

Public relations is the art of managing how information about a company is disseminated to the public. Decades of experience have proven to me that it's best for business owners to focus on managing day-to-day operations (proposals, customer service, human resources, accounting.) But devising new promotional ideas is time-consuming and, admit it, not everyone has the talent. Developing effective marketing campaigns and creating interesting news stories, newsletters, web content, blogs and ads should be given to a proven PR professional.

To get the attention of the right people – editors and reporters – your news release must persuade important influencers that your business, services or products are worth consideration. Media people don't have time to spend on incomplete ideas. Doing it right takes time and creativity. Maybe it's time for you to retain a proven pro like yours truly. After all, 'Great PR doesn't happen by itself.'

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