

PR_{FOR} ANYONE™

*100+ Affordable
Ways to Easily
Create Buzz for
Your Business*



Christina Daves

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NEW YORK

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To my incredible husband, Steve, who loves and supports me every step of the way—even when I see a new shiny penny. Nothing I do would be possible without you.

To my amazing kids, Justin and Megan, without whom, life would be meaningless.

Special thanks to everyone who contributed expertise or a unique story for this book. Sharing your knowledge is an invaluable gift you are providing readers. Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey!

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Foreword

As a 37-year veteran of the PR industry, I know first-hand the struggles entrepreneurs and small business owners face needing to gain exposure, but not having the budget to carryout a full-fledged publicity campaign. Nothing is more effective in gaining exposure than free media placement, however, most business owners have no idea how to even start. *PR for Anyone™ 100+ Affordable Ways to Easily Create Buzz for You and Your Business* provides invaluable resources and tips for business owners to easily generate their own publicity.

Author, Christina Daves, shares her journey of launching a business and her quest for gaining exposure for a new product concept. Not having a budget for a publicist and without any experience in the industry, she managed to teach herself successful formulas that led to consistent media exposure. In this book, she teaches you how she handled her own publicity and achieved unprecedented success appearing in over 50 media outlets in less than one year. Christina put

PR for Anyone™ together in a format of easy-to-read tips to simplify gaining and using the knowledge she shares. She also enlists the resources of people in the media to share their tips to continue helping the reader navigate the waters of publicity and learn about what it is the media wants to see.

What I love about *PR for Anyone™* is that it is written from the perspective of the small business owner. I was in the PR industry. It was my job to create publicity campaigns and gain exposure for my clients. But Christina shows you how it can be done in-house, affordably, and effectively by following her tips and recommendations. As an industry professional, I can put value on what she shares with the reader and attest to the fact that these systems will work if implemented. Bottom line, it's all about building relationships and Christina shows you how to do that with people in the media and how to continue to gain exposure for your business.

Welcome to the wonderful world of PR and congratulations on the success that is sure to come by reading and implementing what Christina has shared with you.

—**Rick Frishman**, Founder of Planned TV Arts
(now called Media Connect)

You're Off To Great Places! Today is Your Day!

—Dr. Seuss

INTRODUCTION

A.K.A. What Do I Know?

“There’s no faux fur in China,” my so-called retail expert advisor informed me.

Let’s call him Richard. I hired Richard to help me manufacture and market my invention—accessories to make ugly medical boots fashion-forward and fun.

While some of my designs specified using faux fur, Richard’s promises were the only fake items he delivered, reeling me in with his big-box name-dropping and personal charm.

He was supposed to make my dreams of bringing these uplifting accessories to the injured a reality by overseeing the manufacturing process and getting them placed in retail outlets.

I laughed. Surely he was joking. When he didn’t laugh with me, I realized I had made a horrible mistake in paying

this man \$27,000. This man who expected me to believe China was in the midst of some economic crisis resulting in a national faux fur shortage.

Despite my bad hiring decision and complete lack of manufacturing knowledge, I was able to procure the furry inventory on my own. But there I was with over 50,000 pieces sitting in a fulfillment house ready to ship to anyone who wanted to buy and wondering to myself, *How in the world am I going to let people know about this product?* I was literally out of money and had no means to pay a public relations firm. How was anyone going to buy something they didn't even know existed?

I was in the dubious position of having a first-of-its-kind product with no easy way to share it with the world.

Unfortunately, hiring a PR firm at \$1,500 to as much as \$10,000 per month with a six-month minimum, and no guarantees of placement, is just too far out of reach for most of us. Public relations or PR, however, is a vital component for increasing sales, gaining credibility, and getting new customers. Most small businesses, including mine, are on tight budgets and have to decide where to spend money to grow. So I ended up handling my own PR—all of it.

We all wish we could hire the infamous movie character, Jerry Maguire, of *Show Me the Money!* fame to handle our PR. Nowadays, however, PR is a task that is being brought in-house by many companies either with someone on-staff or even the business owner handling it themselves. The big question becomes whether or not you or someone in your office can manage the PR for your business and be as effective as a public relations firm?

Any publicity you receive gives you instant credibility. There is the presumption that if you are covered by the media, you must be good at what you do. So the question is not whether you need PR, but how to obtain it most cost-effectively. For many of us, it becomes a “do-it-yourself” project, which really can be easier than it sounds.

While a PR firm you hire has insider contacts in the industry that they’ve already established, there is absolutely no reason you can’t find your own media contacts and start building your own relationships. You can become a go-to expert in your industry or just land some great press coverage on your business, product, or service starting from scratch and all by yourself.

My friends call me “The Resourceful One” because I’m really good at researching and finding solutions. So I set out to learn everything I possibly could about public relations and how to gain media exposure.

Apparently I’m a quick study because I appeared in over fifty media outlets in one year, including nationally syndicated shows such as the *Steve Harvey Show* and *Dr. Oz*, as well as local FOX, NBC, and CBS affiliates, the *Washington Post*, *Parenting Magazine*, and many others—all in the first year of business!

I conducted countless hours of research on the Internet, listened to every *How to Gain Media Exposure* podcast I could find, and read every book I could get my hands on. I also attended a speed-dating format event with actual members of the media, which was great for learning how to become more comfortable talking to producers and reporters.

In fact, the best lesson I learned is that the people in the media are no different from us. Their job is to book guests

or tell stories, and your job is to provide them with great content. They need us as much as we need them, maybe more. Connect with them and start building relationships so you become their go-to person in your area of expertise.

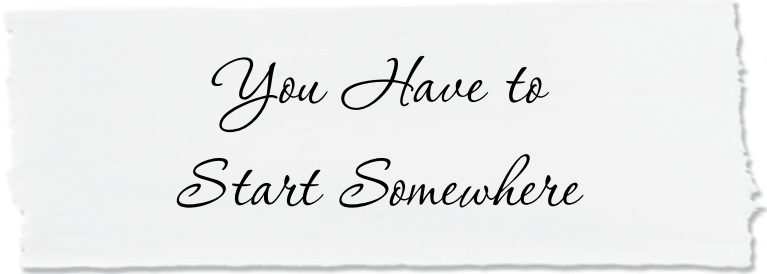
Now you know that it *can* be done, but you're probably wondering, *How much time is this going to take?* When I started, it took tons of time, but I've done all of that legwork for you. I've figured out the hard way what works and what doesn't, and I am sharing all of that information with you.

Some days I spend as little as fifteen minutes on PR and some days more. It's all about scheduling when you are going to work on it, and we'll get into that in more detail throughout the book. My suggestion is to start out dedicating about an hour a day to PR and you should start seeing results soon.

What I have done for you in this book is summarized all of my research and experience into easy tips for you to use to start generating your own publicity. Not only am I giving you my tips, but I also reached out to industry experts who have provided suggestions as well.

I am living proof that anyone can learn the basics of do-it-yourself PR, develop a personal plan, build relationships, and get great results! So put on your PR hat and get ready for some strategies that will allow you to create an effective PR campaign.

And I will bet you all the faux fur in China you can do it!



*You Have to
Start Somewhere*

*Y*ou know you've got a great business, even a superior business. But it's your competitor who is always hogging the spotlight, gaining the media exposure, the leads, and the customers.

You fantasize about what you would say if only you could shove them aside and tell the world how incredible you are. How you would wow them with your knowledge, dazzle them with your product, or simply share the logical reasons why your business is the best. In reality though, you're hunched over your laptop, daydreaming, wondering where to even start?

I hear it all the time: *I don't even know the first thing when it comes to PR.* Guess what? I didn't either. Now that I do, I'm going to share it all with you, and even include tips from industry experts.

At first, getting publicity seems elusive, even scary. I assure you this initial fear-of-the-unknown will pass quickly, especially once you start seeing results.

So relax. And let's get started.

You may not think these first tips relate to public relations, but they are absolutely crucial in building your overall image, brand, and ultimately, your PR.

Anything that represents you or your company is vital to your PR efforts. You must be professional, expert-worthy, and someone the media would want to share with their audience.

Tip #1
Paid Vs. Earned

Publicity is absolutely critical. A good PR story is infinitely more effective than a front page ad.

—Richard Branson

To start, PR and advertising are not the same thing.

Advertising is something for which you pay, and you get to control the message. So, you are paying to tell people what you want them to hear. There is often less credibility with advertising because everyone knows you paid for it.

PR is free, but you don't get to control what someone else conveys about you. You provide information in a press release or in an interview, then see what someone else has to say about you. The upside to PR, besides being free, is that it provides credibility. It's not you talking about you. It's someone else talking about you, and that makes it more

believable. PR is essentially a third-party endorsement of you or your company, otherwise known in the public relations industry as “earned media.”

The potential downside is a journalist who doesn't see things the way you do, and writes something not favorable. That actually happened to me very early on. A top blog site wrote about my products but didn't like them and said I had, “tween-meets-Michaels” designs. Ouch! Kick in the stomach with that review. Ironically, that post has led to thousands of dollars in sales. (Thank you to Google Analytics for showing from where sales are generated.) And the good news, that is the only bad review I've ever gotten.

Tip #2

What's in a Name?

What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

—William Shakespeare

You absolutely must own your business domain name. If someone else already has it, reconsider the name of your business. There are variations you can use. However, I recommend against using a hyphenated domain name, or a name with an extension such as, LLC. It's too complicated and makes it difficult to differentiate yourself.

If you do decide to go the hyphen or extension route, be certain that the other website using your actual business domain name is one you would be okay with your customers or the media visiting. Odds are, at some point, they will

land on that page inadvertently. If it's a direct competitor or someone who sells something that may be offensive, you should reconsider.

There are, however, unique ways to use your business name in a domain that can be effective. When I owned a brick and mortar store, Details for the Home, we tried to secure the domain, www.detailsforthehome.com. Someone had already purchased it, but they weren't using it. Since they were not in direct competition with us, and since we were a store, we opted to use www.shopatdetails.com, which worked for what we were doing.

Next, ask yourself if your domain name is easy to remember? If not, find one that is. Remember to make sure it's pertinent to your business as we did with Details using "shop at." Even if you're already doing business with an overly complicated name, just forward the new, easy-to-remember domain name to your existing website. This way, nothing changes except the odds that you'll gain more visitors.

When I started my current company, I loved the name my friends helped me come up with, CastMedic Designs. It was a perfect description of the product. It left room to expand the line. Best of all, it's my initials, "CMD." Perfect, right? Well, not so much.

Over time and with increased media appearances, I realized it was in fact, a terrible name! It's hard to remember, difficult to say, and even harder to spell. I cringed when I watched the recording of my appearance on the *Steve Harvey Show*, as he awkwardly pronounced my business name. CastMedic Designs doesn't exactly roll off the tongue.

I now own the domain, www.healinstyle.com. It's perfect for TV, radio, or just in conversation. It's memorable and I

have it set up to forward to www.castmedicdesigns.com. This way, I didn't lose any online credibility already established with the original domain.

MY FAVORITE TIP

Don't forget variations and misspellings of your domain name. For example, I also own the domain, www.heelinstyle.com, which is also forwarded to the main CastMedic Designs website. Cover all of your bases with possible spelling issues. You want people to find you.



Tip #3

Do I Have a Deal For You!



The way to wealth depends on just two words, industry and frugality.

—Benjamin Franklin

An excellent place to search for domain names is Go Daddy at www.godaddy.com.

Before you start searching and purchasing, let me share a little money-saving secret with you. Go to Google and enter “Go Daddy coupon.” Nine times out of ten, you will find a coupon for a \$2.49 to \$3.99 annual fee for a domain name.

The coupons are usually limited to one per month. Using this discount, however, allows you to stockpile domain names pertinent to your business, at a low price.