

## What is The Public Relations Manifesto?

While this is a book about how to get featured in the media, it's actually a lot bigger than that.

The Public Relations Manifesto is about how to get featured in the media in a way that creates more value for you, your clients, your team, people who work in the media, their audiences, and even the world as a whole.

Is this an audacious goal? Absolutely.

Is it realistic? That depends on who you ask.

I believe it is realistic *for the right people*.

If you have your mind made up that you're not capable of creating that kind of impact, then you won't. Don't get me wrong — the strategies and tactics I teach in The Public Relations Manifesto will still work in helping you get featured in the media, but we're doing something bigger than that. We're building a tribe of people who want to not only get featured in the media to grow their own business, but also to leverage that to create massive value for everyone around them.

If you do believe that you're capable of creating that kind of impact — *even if you don't yet know how*, then you probably are a good fit for the tribe we're building. And if you don't think you're capable but you're open to trying, you still might be a fit.

Of course you want to get featured in the media so you can become a recognized authority in your industry, attract more clients, and earn more money. You're an expert at what you do, and you deserve to be handsomely rewarded for serving your clients as well as you do. But because of your success, which you have certainly worked your ass off to achieve, you also have a duty to contribute back to the people around you. And by properly leveraging public relations, you can do that more effectively.

That's what this book is all about.

It's about how to ethically get featured in the media so that you can not only achieve more, but also contribute more to your team, community, and the world as a whole.

Look, any douchebag can lie, cheat, and bribe their way to the top, but their time at the top will be short lived. I'm talking about the Elizabeth Holmes, Patch Bakers, and Bernie Maddofs of the world. They may rise faster than others *at first*, but the universe has a funny way of balancing everything out, so they fall just as fast, if not faster. As if hit by a Thanos snap, they plummet from their once lofty position, disintegrating into dust and destroying their former bullshit persona. The reputational damage they suffer makes it nearly impossible for them to recover.

I don't feel bad for them. They deserve every bit of pain they suffer as a result of that. But they aren't reading this book and they are not part of our tribe.

When you apply the principles outlined in The Public Relations Manifesto, here's what happens:

You'll start to close more deals, faster and easier. There are two reasons for this. The first is that your authority status means people will already know, like, and trust you, so you won't have to spend as much time convincing them that you're qualified to solve their problems. And the second is that instead of you chasing everyone down, more people will seek you out. This is a game changer.

You'll also be able to charge more money. That's a good thing for you *as well as your clients* because it means you can afford to provide even better service, which means even better results for them.

The combination of more business at higher prices means you'll need to hire more employees, contractors, vendors, and businesses. Now you're creating jobs, and those jobs don't just support the employees you hire — they also support their families. And that money goes back into the local communities supporting even more businesses and families. The ripple effect on this is incalculable.

But it doesn't stop there.

By being featured in the media, you're also helping to support the media outlet, its employees, and its audience.

Every media outlet needs to produce a ton of content to keep up with the demands of an information-hungry world. Exponentially more content than ever before. That requires experts like you to share your insight with journalists who then craft a compelling story from it. In other words, they can't do it without you.

That content is the lifeblood of any media outlet, which means your contributions help it thrive, along with its employees, contractors, vendors, and businesses it engages. Again, that money goes back into the local communities supporting even more businesses and families, and the ripple effect continues.

Even the portion of the audience who never hires you benefits from this.

Think about all the people who read an article or watch a news segment featuring you, and then learn something from the knowledge you shared. If they implement your advice and their business or life improves as a result, that's even more value that you've contributed to the world. When their business grows as a result of that, you have played a direct role in that. Here comes that ripple effect again. It's crazy to think about the potential impact this has when you consider that the audience of a media outlet can range from thousands to millions of readers, viewers, or listeners every month.

So The Public Relations Manifesto is about you getting featured in the media, but it's actually a lot bigger than that.

## Authenticity

We have to be one hundred percent committed to authenticity in every aspect of our public relations.

While everyone is talking about authenticity lately and the word itself is easy to define, how it applies to public relations is a little more nuanced than simply telling the truth. I break it into two related, but distinctly different aspects, and both are equally important.

The first aspect is authenticity in what you've achieved and are doing.

Unfortunately, a lot of people follow the "fake it 'till you make it" philosophy, so they make up stories about what they've achieved in an effort to appear more impressive. Usually, they'll start with a relatively small lie, like claiming they were featured in a particular news outlet when in reality, they simply submitted a press release which was syndicated to some deep dark corner of that outlet's website. Or they'll pad their user base or revenue numbers just a bit to make it look like their business is bigger and more successful than it really is. But before long, their lies grow quickly because they have to continue showing forward progress and growth. This is just as unsustainable as it is unethical, and before long, they hit a point where their lies are completely unbelievable.

This is always a bad idea. It might not seem as grandiose or sexy, but you should only publicize what you've actually achieved and can prove in full context. It applies to everything you say and do. It even applies to what you *don't* say. For example, if someone thinks you've achieved something that you really haven't and you let them continue to believe that, it's a lie of omission, and it's no better than directly telling them the lie yourself.

This is critical for a number of reasons.

The first, and most important reason is that it's the right thing to do. There's already enough lies in the world, and we don't need to add more.

There's also a spiritual aspect to it. If you're exaggerating or lying to get featured, it's going to mess with your energy. You'll find that opportunities just don't pan out and you won't quite be able to identify why. You might even start sabotaging yourself, unless you're a complete sociopath, in which case, all bets are off. But even then, while you may not self sabotage, you'll face far more adversity and friction than if you are completely authentic.

Another reason is because it hurts the journalists who feature you. What do you think happens to a journalist when it comes out that their reporting is inaccurate? You don't have to have any experience in the media industry to guess that it damages their reputation, and often, can get them fired. Some people don't seem to care about that and are comfortable treating journalists

as a means to an end rather than seeing them as fellow humans. I think that's a pretty fucked up perspective. Especially considering that most people in the media are already overworked and underappreciated to begin with.

And finally, when you get caught — *because it's not if, it's when* — you will be essentially blacklisted by the media and the only features you'll get from that point forward will be negative.

The second aspect of authenticity is presenting your true personality.

Too often, people present a contrived version of themselves that they think others will find more likable. They'll say things they don't really believe because they think it's what others want to hear, or they'll avoid saying things they do believe because they're afraid of being attacked by others. Both are equally poor choices that hurt your public relations efforts, not to mention your emotional state.

This is both a branding and a public relations issue.

When the public image you present is congruent with who you truly are, your pitches will be more effective, the media features you earn will resonate more powerfully with the right audiences, and you'll attract the right people into your life.

But when someone puts on a fake persona, others may not be able to identify *exactly* what's off, but they will sense something. That subtle feeling of uncertainty will destroy any trust they might have had in that person, and without trust, your pitches will fall flat, audiences will ignore your media coverage, and you'll attract disingenuous people into your life.

The reality is that most people hide behind a public facade. People have always done this to some degree, but today the problem is bigger than ever before, both in terms of frequency and scale, because of social media. If you've spent more than thirty seconds on virtually any platform, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Almost everyone is competing to put on a glamorous, but fake, highlight reel of their life.

On the other side of the equation, when you post something, no matter how innocuous, strangers and friends alike, will come out of every dark corner of the internet to tell you exactly

how wrong, stupid, and evil they think you are. The less authentic you are, the more this will happen, and the more aggressive it will be.

I believe you have a duty to get comfortable with this. Both because it's not going away, and because, in order to accomplish anything of any significance, you'll have to face a growing number of brutal haters, trolls, and critics. At the same time, by being authentically yourself, you'll also attract the right audience who can become a loyal tribe that will support and defend you.

The importance of authenticity cannot be overstated because it plays a critical role in earning positive media coverage, building and nurturing strong relationships with media contacts, and achieving significant goals. As such, it forms the foundation of the public relations manifesto.

## Value

We're all excited about the idea of being featured in the media and having a journalist rave about how awesome we are and sing our accolades throughout the article, but that kind of story makes up a minuscule percentage of what you're going to find in legitimate media outlets. And it's reserved for industry titans like Elon Musk, Arianna Huffington, and Tim Cook.

Why do they seem to easily and consistently get this kind of coverage?

It's simple. It's because they consistently bring massive value to everything they do. They're doing big things that positively impact huge numbers of people, and as a result, what they're doing becomes newsworthy. It's not just the value, but the perceived value. That distinction is subtle, but significant.

This means you need to base your public relations efforts on bringing value to a media outlet's audience first, then to that outlet's journalists, and last, on your own needs.

Doing that increases your likelihood of actually getting featured in the first place, which means your efforts will be more efficient and productive. It also means that you won't bog journalists down with irrelevant bullshit that they and their audience don't care about. I cannot emphasize enough just how important this is.

It's more difficult today than ever before to earn legitimate media coverage just because of the recent changes to the industry. And it's even more difficult in the midst of an absolutely crazy news cycle, which has been a constant since 2020. I don't see that changing anytime soon.

So how do we bring real value?

We do that by providing information that the audience wants or needs. This might include:

- Insight into new or pending laws in your industry and how they will affect people.
- How to solve or prepare for a particular problem.
- Innovations that are coming or have recently been released.
- How to achieve a particular objective.

The idea here is to share your knowledge and expertise in a way that someone watching, listening to, or reading can understand and implement to improve their life or business in some way even if they never hire you or buy anything from you.

Yes, that means giving away useful information for free. And yes, that also means some people will simply use that information and never become a client. That's OK because those people were never going to become your clients anyway. But the bigger picture is that you're demonstrating your expertise, which is what serious clients need to see in order to trust you. They don't want to DIY — they just want to make sure you're qualified to solve whatever problem it is that you solve for people. And you demonstrate that by freely sharing your knowledge.

This also plays a role in that positive ripple effect I talked about earlier. Think of all the people you're positively impacting when you help just one person improve their life or business. Now multiply that by all the people in an outlet's audience who could benefit from that information. Not to mention the impact on the media outlets, their employees, contractors, and vendors. Their ability to continue sharing this kind of information and impact others helps elevate everyone, but it especially helps you because it's a powerful channel to promote your business and position yourself as an authority in your industry.

## Purpose

I love making money but money is just a byproduct of the value we put back into the world, and that value is based on our purpose.

We need a purpose that's bigger than money. Bigger than ourselves. Something that supports, empowers, and enriches others. Obviously, these "others" include our clients, but also certain groups, our communities, or even the world as a whole.

For example, my purpose is to help *legitimate* experts get featured in the media so they can become a recognized authority in their industry, attract more clients, and earn more money because I know first hand how impactful that can be. I want to help them grow their businesses so they can serve more clients, hire more staff, buy from more vendors, and support the charities that matter to them. The ripple effects of this are incalculable. And in elevating these *legitimate* experts, I'm also helping them to drown out the incompetent and fraudulent people posing as experts, which helps protect others.

Your purpose will be unique to you, but it's going to be based on something you're passionate about. It may even be the reason you started your business in the first place.

This is important for several reasons. The first is that it's the right thing to do, and frankly, the world needs a hell of a lot more purpose-driven people to uplift others. Another reason is that it can help you get featured in the media because it often creates an emotionally charged hook to your story. And the last reason is that having a purpose that's bigger than yourself will help you keep going in the face of adversity because you're not just doing it for yourself.

## Professionalism

The internet has been both a blessing and a curse to the media industry. Well, to the world as a whole, really, but that's a topic for a different book.

It has created the ability to reach far more people far more efficiently than ever before, but it's also created an intensely competitive environment with virtually no barrier to entry. Today, rather than investing millions of dollars in a building, printing presses, delivery trucks, and a massive



staff, you and I can start our own media outlet from our bedroom in our spare time. And if a media outlet creates the kind of content people want, it will succeed. That's why Joe Rogan now has a larger audience than the once dominant TV news network, CNN. Add to that the fact that consumers expect everything on the internet to be free, and you can see how the media industry is between a rock and a hard place today.

Revenue at many, if not most media outlets is down, competition is up, and over the last several years, many have even had to shut down completely. As a result, everyone in the media, from the journalist at your small local newspaper to the larger-than-life anchor on your favorite national news program, are being asked to work harder than ever and to do more with less.

Most people don't know this.

So on top of the sense of entitlement many already have that makes them feel they deserve to be featured simply for existing, they're now increasingly frustrated by the lack of response they get when pitching the media.

They say, "Hey, I've got a great story, and I'm constantly pitching it to journalists, but no one is featuring me or even responding. This is bullshit! That's their job!"

It's not, really. But we'll talk more about that in a moment.

These people often then become even more demanding, entitled, and rude to the journalists, as if that's going to somehow improve the situation.

Look, I get it — it is frustrating to pitch what seems like the perfect story to a journalist who frequently covers that exact type of topic, and hearing nothing but crickets, but that's the nature of this industry. And it's getting worse for all the reasons I just mentioned. But a lack of response from journalists doesn't mean that the journalists or the outlets they work for are somehow unethical, propagandists, or fake news, nor does it mean that they're trying to suppress your story or that they hate you. In most cases, it simply means that they either didn't see your pitch because they get hundreds of emails every day, or that your story wasn't a fit for any one of dozens of potential reasons. And they simply don't have time to respond to everyone who pitches them to explain why it's not a fit because that would be a full time job in and of itself.

Think about it like this — do you take the time to reply to every random salesperson pitching their products or services to you? Of course not. I know I sure as hell don't, and I don't know anyone else who does, either. So why would you expect that from journalists who receive exponentially more emails?

A little graciousness goes a long way here. Treat the journalists you're pitching like fellow humans you actually care about, because just like you, they're overworked and pulled in all directions.

Instead of being demanding, like many of the other people pitching them, take a gentler, more professional approach. It may feel like this slows the process down, but it doesn't. The truth is there's not much you can do to speed it up, and trying to force it only irritates and alienates the journalists you're trying to get to feature you.

Nothing happens as fast or as easily as we would like. But what separates great people from average people is that they are willing to stick with it despite the delays and challenges until they succeed.

## Collaboration

Early in my career, I relied entirely on myself and refused to ever ask for help. I had a misguided idea that I should do everything myself, but as time went on, I realized how shortsighted this idea was because we can achieve exponentially more when we work together. Collaboration is the key to true success.

This applies to public relations as well.

You probably already know that people are more likely to help support you if you're helping to support them, so why would PR be any different? And it's not just when you're directly supporting them, but also when you're supporting others. Call it what you want. Karma, goodwill, energetic vibration, blessing — the bottom line is that when you support others, good things tend to happen for you.

Now I don't want you to look at this from a transactional perspective. It's not a "I did this for you so you should do this for me" kind of thing. That's a bad take that will lead to unmet expectations and massive frustration, which you'll then take out on the people around you.

So while you absolutely should continue to pitch your story to journalists, you also should look for opportunities to collaborate with them. That might mean sharing their posts and articles on social media. After all, in today's increasingly KPI-driven world, journalists are often judged by their employers based on the traffic their articles generate, so by doing this, you're helping both them and the media outlet they work for.

You can also help connect them with other expert sources when they need them. Journalists will often post on social media asking to interview people who have a particular expertise or have had a particular experience, and if you can connect them with the right people to help them complete their article, you should, even if the source isn't you. Now obviously you won't introduce them to your competitors because if they're looking for that expertise, you should pitch yourself as the source. But you can and should connect them with anyone else they're looking for.

This is something I do on a daily basis. And I don't keep score. If I know that a reporter needs a particular source, and I know someone suitable, I'll make that introduction even when they aren't a client. Typically, I'll even set up the interview via Zoom, and then create a text transcription from the recording and send it to the journalist after the interview to make their job easier.

Yes, this does take some time out of my day, and while I sometimes directly benefit from this, often I don't. But that's OK because I'm helping at least two people in this scenario, and because I'm putting good energy into the world, which I believe helps me as well as others in the long run. We can't always directly measure the ROI on some of our activities, particularly activities like this, but like I mentioned before — it's not always about keeping score.

Another thing I do, and believe you should do as well, is purchase a subscription to each of the media outlets you work with. That includes any outlets you're regularly pitching. No, the journalists won't know you're doing this, and there's no value in telling them because it won't

help you get featured anyway. (In fact, it can even come off as cringey.) But if a media outlet is valuable to you, why would you not want to help support it?

These are just a few examples of how you can collaborate with journalists and there are a potentially unlimited number of other ways you can collaborate with them. The key is to invest the time necessary in getting to know them and nurture a relationship with them. When you do that, you'll start to see countless opportunities for collaboration.

Collaboration with others who aren't in the media is equally important. This essentially gives you a bigger megaphone by introducing you to their networks, and when you align to help support their causes, it can create new opportunities to be featured in the media. And of course, it also helps everyone involved to achieve more than they could individually.

So far in this section, we've talked about the giving part of collaboration, but not the asking part. Often, people lean too far in one direction or the other. Most will constantly ask others to collaborate *for* themselves, but rarely will they reciprocate. A smaller group will constantly collaborate for others, but rarely ask others to do the same for them. Neither of these are ideal. Instead, you should strike a balance by regularly both giving and asking. After all, we all have to make a living and we're all working towards our own particular goals, so striking that balance is crucial.

It's important to frame this properly though. If you frame it in a transactional way, it will likely hurt your relationships. So don't say something like, "Hey, since I did XYZ for you, I'd like you to do ABC for me." A better approach is to simply ask for what you'd like them to do for you. And it's worth noting that when you specifically tell them why you want them to do that, they will be more likely to follow through for you.

It's important to proactively look for opportunities to collaborate because most people aren't going to ask for your help in the first place. But it's also important to make sure the people in your network know that they're welcome to reach out when they need your help with something. That's something I do regularly, both by posting about the fact that I'm always open to collaborating and that people can reach out to me anytime, and by communicating that message directly via phone, email, or DM.

I believe this is incredibly important because it serves you, the people in your network, and the media and journalists. But it's also important because many media outlets and journalists are struggling as the industry continues to adapt to changes, and by collaborating to help support them, you're also helping them to survive a rapidly evolving industry. Keep in mind — without them, your options for earning worthwhile publicity will be reduced dramatically. And that's not just if these companies go out of business. It's also if they face reduced revenue and have to focus more on covering stories that generate a higher return on their investment of time, capital, manpower, and space. That means ignoring small businesses and instead focusing on giant companies that already have a tremendous competitive advantage over your business.

It doesn't take a genius to see how collaboration is both the right thing to do ethically and a smart business decision.

## The Public Relations Manifesto Framework

Creating consistent results, which you can then improve on, comes down to following a documented process. This is true for all things.

So I've developed what I call *The Public Relations Manifesto Framework*, which documents the process we use today in my public relations firm, Spartan Media.

But there is what I consider to be an interesting origin story behind this. It wasn't just a great business idea that I came up with one day.

Don't get me wrong — there's a huge need for public relations, and I'd love to be able to say I was some kind of genius who saw a need, created an effective way to serve it, and immediately capitalized on it. But that's not how it went down.

My journey from first dipping my toe into public relations to where I am today was long, twisted, and bumpy. But that journey gave me a lot of insight that many others don't have. In some ways, it has presented a lot of obstacles, but in other ways, it's blessed me with a lot of advantages.

I could talk (or in this case, write) all day about my journey, but for the sake of brevity, here's the condensed version — while I've dabbled in public relations from the beginning of my career, I didn't focus on it until a few years ago.

The first time I was featured in the media, I was interviewed by a reporter at The Tampa Tribune about the importance of having a website for business. While that may seem like a silly topic today, it certainly wasn't at the time, when many companies still didn't have websites. I went on to be featured in various media outlets over the years, but it would still be a long time before I started offering public relations to our clients. In the meantime, I ran my company as a full service digital marketing agency for well over a decade.

Then, I was blindsided by a health crisis that nearly killed me.

I spent the next two years on my deathbed while my company withered away to nothing and debt piled up. It was the proverbial "perfect storm" because I had next to no income coupled with massive and growing expenses from just trying to stay alive. In the process, we also burned through all of my savings.

Here I was, in my mid thirties at the time, starting my career over from less than zero because not only did I now have to build a new business from scratch, but I also had to do it with no capital and in massive debt—all while still dealing with my health crisis. And to make matters worse, since I had essentially disappeared for two years, I had no authority. I had no current clients, case studies, or examples of our work. At this point, I was seen no differently than some random freelancer on Fiverr.

I had to radically transform my situation and I had to do it quickly if I was going to be able continue treatments, stay alive, and be around for my family, so I began to formulate a plan, then I took action.

My first step was to write a powerful article, which I published on my own blog. Then, I leveraged that article to pitch the editors at various media outlets for an opportunity to write an article on the same topic there. Then, I leveraged those articles to pitch several podcast hosts for an opportunity to be a guest on their shows

-XYZ

I've been involved in many aspects of digital marketing for a large part of my life, from the mid nineties while I was still serving in the Marine Corps all the way up to today in 2022. I launched my first web design agency in 2000, right at the beginning of the dot com bubble, in a sleepy little Florida city called Spring Hill. That failed relatively quickly, and I used to believe it was because I was too early and in too small of a town, but later realized that was a bullshit excuse. The truth was that I failed because I sucked at sales. So badly that I never closed a single client.

I lost everything I had! My house, two cars, savings, credit score, and most importantly, my confidence. Everything. But the lessons I learned from the experience made it all worthwhile.

From there, I landed a job at a small advertising agency in that same same sleepy little city. I believe that job was a huge turning point for me because of what I learned and who I became while there, and the scary part is I almost missed out on that opportunity. You see, *on paper*, I wasn't qualified even though I truly did have the skills they were looking for.

The newspaper with that job listing sat on my desk for about a week while I debated whether to even apply at all. The agency was looking for a graphic designer with 5+ years of experience and a bachelor's degree. The problem was that I had neither of those qualifications. Not only did I not have a degree — I had actually left high school *before graduating* to join the Marine Corps, so I didn't even have a high school diploma! (While serving, I ended up getting my GED.) Also, I had exactly zero agency experience. I had done some graphic design for a few months at a small print shop, but that ended on bad terms and I didn't have a chance to copy the files from any of my work.

Here I was, with what at the time was my dream job sitting right in front of me, and I seem to have nothing they're looking for. Fortunately, a girl I was dating at the time convinced me to call them. "After all," she said, "what's the worst they can do—say no?"

No shit. She was right. Thank you, Nicole.

So I called.

This was on a Friday evening and when I spoke to the owner, he told me, “Look, we’ve been interviewing for two weeks, and we have narrowed it down to two candidates. Both have over seven years of experience. One has a bachelor’s degree in graphic design and the other has a Masters of Fine Arts degree. But if you can get down here before we close for the week, I’ll interview you.”

Fortunately, the agency was literally a one minute drive from my house, so I got there quickly. I was nervous because not only was I completely unqualified on paper, but also because my portfolio had absolutely no real world client work. Everything was designs I had created to teach myself and hone my skills. (I was entirely self taught.)

The interview went well, and then came the time for the owner to look at my portfolio. But instead of whatever I imagined his reaction might be, he seemed genuinely impressed. And as we reviewed each design together, he asked about the thought process behind each one.

After the last one, he paused, looked up from the computer, paused again, and said, “I want you to know that the concepts in your designs and thought process behind them are things I rarely see even from designers with a Masters in Fine Arts degree.”

I ended up getting that job. I know he paid me less than he would have had to pay the other two designers, but I felt that was a fair trade off for the opportunity, and over the next few years while I worked there, he became one of the most influential people in my life.

The urge to start my own company again continued to burn at my soul until eventually, I absolutely had to take action. But I didn’t want to make the same mistakes I made last time, so before doing that, I left my dream job and spent the next year working in various sales jobs. I knew that if I was going to build a successful company, I would need to get a lot better at sales.

-XYZ



## Developing the image of an authoritative expert

They say, “Dress for the job you want, not the one you have,” and that principle applies far beyond just what you’re wearing.

You have to present the image of an authoritative expert long before anyone else recognizes that you actually are. That's because most people claim to be experts at what they do, but very few truly are. I blame the bullshit “fake it till you make it” mindset that became popular in the 1980s and has been a plague on the business world since then.

So instead of simply hoping that people believe you when you say you’re an expert, you need to demonstrate it.

A big part of this is the content you create. Your content should be original, useful, and enable people to achieve something after consuming it even if they never buy anything from you.

## Building your media outlets and contacts list

This is the part of The Public Relations Manifesto Framework that is surprisingly easy. In fact, anytime I talk about this part on stage, TV, or a podcast, the audience is always blown away by just how easy it is once I show them a few tactics.

Despite being as easy as it is, building a list of relevant media outlets and contacts is incredibly important because all of your outreach will be based on this. When you get it right, your efforts will be exponentially more efficient and productive.

We will dive into exactly how to find relevant media outlets, identify which ones are quality versus garbage, and how to find the contact info for the journalists at those relevant, high quality media outlets.

## Building and nurturing relationships with your media contacts

The importance of this cannot be overstated because relationships can mean the difference between your pitches being opened and read, or simply being deleted.

But building relationships with people in the media — the journalists, editors, anchors, producers, bookers, podcast hosts, and anyone else you may come in contact with, requires consistent effort over a long period of time. And it requires a process. This is not something you can leave to chance.

We will outline a simple process to cut through the noise, become more valuable to your contacts, and build and nurture the kind of relationships with them that will help you to consistently get featured in the media.

## Pitching your story to the media

You could have an amazing story that will absolutely change people's lives for the better, but if you don't pitch it effectively, no one will ever have an opportunity to hear and benefit from it.

This is where a powerful pitch comes in. You need to be able to clearly and concisely demonstrate why their audience will care what you have to say, what specific value you'll bring to the table, and why you're a qualified source for their story.

We will give you a killer formula to craft a pitch that grabs a journalist's attention, shows why their audience will care, and presents you as the most compelling and qualified source for their story.

## Leveraging the publicity you've earned

Most of the impact from the publicity you earn comes from what you do with that feature afterwards. The Perrado Principle applies here, except it's not 80/20 when it comes to public relations. It's probably closer to 90/10 or even 95/5.

Incorporating your publicity into all of your marketing efforts is an absolute game changer because it positions you as an authority in your industry, builds trust, and increases your exposure to potential clients as well as people in the media.

We will break down exactly how to leverage the publicity you've earned in all aspects of your marketing to maximize its impact.

## Measuring the performance of your public relations

What gets measured gets improved, but measuring the impact of public relations can be difficult because it's not as straightforward as other marketing channels.

The key is understanding where the appropriate KPIs are hiding, what they mean, and what to do with that data.

We will show you exactly what to track and how to measure the performance of your public relations so you can refine and improve.

## Maximizing your impact with tech

Public relations is highly competitive, so you'll need every advantage you can find. And the right tech can give you a tremendous advantage.

The key is to use the right tech in the right ways to reduce or eliminate grunt work, monitor your brand online, and nurture the right relationships, to name just a few ways it can be used.

We will show you exactly what tech to use and how to use it to maximize the impact of your public relations and avoid the mistakes that can hurt your efforts.

## What You Need to Know Before Getting Started...

### What is public relations?

*\*Important — do not skip over this section! You may think you already know the answer, but unless you've worked in public relations for at least a few years, there is a lot you don't know about this seemingly simple question. And that knowledge can mean the difference between success and failure.*

I talk to a lot of entrepreneurs every day, and most don't understand public relations. This is unsurprising since they don't work in the field. But it's important to understand how the industry works because a lack of understanding leads to frustration and poor or no results.

Public relations isn't about just getting featured in the media, although that is an important part of it. True public relations—*the kind that has a positive impact on your business*— is about getting featured in the right media outlets in a way that positions you as an authority in your industry to help you attract more clients and earn more money.

This isn't an overnight process. First you have to develop the right strategy, then execute your campaign, then as you start to earn positive publicity — and this will take far more time and effort than you think — you have to leverage it in your marketing. Over time, if you consistently do all of that, it will start to drive sales.

How badly do most people misunderstand public relations?

Case in point — a while back, the founder of a search engine optimization agency reached out to me. For the sake of this example, let's call him Mr. P. He needed me to help him secure some publicity for a client who had been unfairly attacked by a particular media outlet. The goal here was to secure some new, positive publicity to push the negative article further down in the search results for his client.

It was obvious from the first call that Mr. P. knew *nothing* about public relations. There were several reasons for this.

The first reason was that during our onboarding call he shared that he had hired some publicists from Upwork, a freelance job board, and that he got no results from them. I could have told him this would be the outcome because real publicists don't waste time promoting their services there. These sites are like the internet version of a flea market where a bunch of people are selling shitty, low-priced services.

Sites like Upwork, Fiverr, and FlexJobs can be great for gigs like graphic design projects or content writing, but they are terrible for strategic, relationship-based projects like public relations. These sites generally attract two kinds of people:

1. Freelancers who are just getting started, lack connections, and can't deliver consistent results.
2. Clients who prioritize getting the absolute lowest price over everything else, including quality, value, and results.

Think about it — what kind of results would you expect when hiring a publicist in an environment where everyone is competing to offer the lowest price? That's like going to Walmart. You're going to find a lot of unqualified people, wearing pajamas and flip flops, in a questionable state of hygiene, offering you garbage.

The next reason was that when we discussed cost, Mr. P. insisted that everyone he hired on Upwork was charging "outrageous" prices. He insisted they should be charging about \$100 to place his client in tier-one outlets like Entrepreneur, Forbes, and Fox Business.

Real publicists charge retainers ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000+ per month, and most do not offer any sort of a guarantee. (My agency is one of the few that does.) If you're wondering what you might expect to get for that investment, let's use the lower end of that range as an example.

You should expect to get at least one piece of publicity, but possibly more. Perhaps two or three. And these probably won't be what we consider tier-one placements, especially if you're not already well known.

If you end up hiring someone to handle your PR, a good rule of thumb is you can expect to pay an experienced agency or freelancer between \$1,000-\$5,000 per placement, depending on the media outlet. Anyone charging less than this should worry you.

And the last reason is that the morning after paying our invoice, which he took his time paying, by the way, Mr. P. began blowing up my phone demanding to know why he hasn't seen his client's articles published yet. He insisted that it was "ridiculous" that he wasn't seeing results just a few hours after the project started.

This reminds me of the old esurance commercial, where in response to one lady's complete misunderstanding of social media, her friend replies, "That's not how it works. That's not how any of this works."

Publicity is not something you can just buy, and there is no "easy button." Sure, you could probably get your aunt to post an article on her cat blog immediately, but that's simply not the case with any real, authoritative media outlets.

Real publicity takes time because you have to develop an effective strategy, build a list of contacts at relevant media outlets, craft a pitch that will get them excited about your story, email or call them with your pitch, and then follow up, because let's face it, they're probably not going to respond to your first contact. Most of those pitches will go nowhere, and if one or more do, you'll still have a lot of coordination to do even after you get a tentative yes.

You could be looking at anywhere between a few days to a few months from your first pitch before a piece of publicity goes live — if it goes anywhere at all.

## Setting realistic expectations for your public relations efforts

Let's get the bad news out of the way early...

You're not going to get covered as often, as fast, or as in-depth as you'd like.

While the media needs to create a ton of content just to keep up today, which means they need your stories, it doesn't mean they're going to cover you just because you pitch them, no matter how well crafted and perfectly timed it may be. In fact, most of your pitches will go nowhere.

Most outlets will limit their coverage on you to a few pieces per year. So while you probably want to be in Forbes every month, unless you're objectively making Elon Musk-level moves, it's unlikely to happen.

If they do decide to cover you, it probably won't be on your timeline. Authoritative outlets follow a production schedule, so unless your story is truly breaking news — *and let's face it, most are*

*not* — it will be pushed back to a later availability in the outlet's editorial calendar. That could be days, weeks, or even months. Hell, as I'm writing this, I'm waiting on no less than three dozen articles and news segments that are already complete, featuring me and my clients to go live, and I've been waiting on these particular pieces for over three months. This is common.

And you'll often find that after a long and in-depth interview with a journalist, your contribution to the article ends up being little more than a side note.

Case in point — I was one of the early adopters of the audio-based social media network, Clubhouse when it first started to gain popularity in late 2020/early 2021. I was regularly a moderator in rooms alongside entrepreneurial giants, including Kevin Harrington, Grant Cardone, and Daymon John. I even wrote an article about the platform in my column at Entrepreneur, which was the most popular article on the entire site for several days. I was unquestionably an authority on the platform.

As a result, I was interviewed by a reporter at Inc magazine who was writing an article about Clubhouse. We spent about an hour discussing pretty much everything you could imagine about the platform and its users. But when the article went live, that sixty minute conversation was whittled down to a single sentence that was not in any way an accurate representation of my thoughts on the platform. That is, unfortunately, the nature of the industry sometimes.

I share these stories because they're funny, but more importantly, because they highlight the reality of public relations. This is critical because unrealistic expectations lead to frustration, and that frustration often leads to giving up on PR entirely. That's a huge mistake that will cost you tremendous opportunities in the long run.

I want you to understand exactly what you're getting yourself into so that when you face the harsh reality of how difficult, time consuming, and often, frustrating this work can be so you're prepared and able to push through to get the results you're looking for.

## Why do we need public relations?

People get excited about seeing their name in an authoritative outlet like Forbes, Fox Business, or the Wall Street Journal, because of the exposure it brings. There's merit to this, but the truth

is you'll typically only see a small bump in web traffic and maybe a few more people reaching out after a big media feature.

Generally speaking, exposure is not where the real value is in public relations. The real value is in the authority that getting featured in a trusted outlet infers.

Look, you can say you're an expert and great at what you do, but that doesn't really mean anything.

You know who else says that?

Literally everyone.

But when a large, trusted media outlet features you, even though they probably aren't saying you're the best, it infers that you are because we all know journalists cite experts, not amateurs. So being featured in the media makes you appear more authoritative and trustworthy.

This makes it easier to close deals, forge valuable partnerships, raise capital, and create a snowball effect of more PR opportunities.

### It speeds up the sales cycle

When you meet a new prospect, you first usually have to spend a lot of time and effort proving that you're qualified to solve their problem. You know how that dog and pony show works. And anything *you* tell them is suspect because it's coming from you and you have something to gain.

But when an authoritative and trusted third party tells them that you're qualified to solve their problem, it creates an entirely different scenario. They become more open and receptive and you don't have to work as hard to earn their trust. Instead of being perceived as a salesman or saleswoman, you're seen as a trusted advisor.

Effective public relations does that for you.

When you're regularly cited as an expert in what you do, sharing your expertise with a media outlet's audience, you're no longer a commodity. You become an authority in your industry



because of a concept known as social proof. This is the authority you gain, by proxy, when you're associated with something or someone who is already highly visible and trusted. In this case, that is the media outlets and journalists.

There's a reason for this — generally speaking, someone featured in the media has been not only vetted, but also *selected*. What I mean by selected is that a journalist has their choice of countless professionals to choose from, so those they do choose tend to be some of the best in their respective industries. People know this, so you being featured elevates their trust in you. But it also elevates trust in another powerful way.

By sharing your insight with a media outlet's audience, you're also demonstrating that you are capable of solving whatever problem it is that you solve for people. Whether you're sharing news, your perspective, or actionable advice, you're showing them, in a positive, non-douchey way, that you're likely qualified to solve that problem for them. Now, it's worth noting that in most of your media features, you won't have a chance to say a lot, so you'll have to earn several features before it will be effective in proving your expertise.

### It enables you to charge higher prices

We all like to think we carefully evaluate the features and benefits of a product or service, weigh the pros and cons, and then make a purely logic-based decision, but that's bullshit. The truth is that we all make an emotional decision and then support that decision with data after the fact.

In the real world, perceived value drives pricing. There's no way around that. That's why one doctor can charge what some might consider astronomical prices while another struggles to make a living. And these two doctors might even have similar education, experience, and skill levels, but because one is perceived as more authoritative and trustworthy, he's able to charge more.

If people perceive you to be of an average skill level, you'll only be able to charge average prices. But if they perceive you to be of an above-average skill level, you'll be able to charge more — significantly more in many cases. That's because they know they're getting greater certainty that they'll achieve the outcome they're looking for.

I'll give you a real world example from my own past. When I got off my deathbed and returned to work several years ago, I had to essentially start over because I had two years with no current clients, case studies, or examples of my work. I was perceived no differently than a kid fresh out of school, so I was unable to charge the kind of prices I used to. I remember one of the first projects I landed, which was priced at about one tenth what I charged before my hiatus — and despite that, the client asked me if I had a “starter package” because that seemed like a lot of money to him. But after I had rebuilt my authority status, I was able to charge my old rates again, and even increase them in many cases.

This is important because the more you charge, the better service you can afford to provide, and the better service you provide, the greater impact you'll be able to create for your clients. That means that your business and theirs grows, and you both make more money, are able to hire more people, and can have a greater impact in the world.

### It helps you attract new opportunities

When you're perceived as an authority in your industry, more people will want to align with you. Clients want to hire you, peers want to collaborate with you, and journalists want to feature you. Rather than constantly grinding to create opportunities, more will come to you.

Here's how that works— each piece of positive publicity creates exposure and trust, and there's a compounding effect with each subsequent piece. Before long, people begin to recognize your name, then they start to respect and trust you, and then they want to align with you. Inevitably, people will share the articles, news segments, and radio and podcast interviews you're featured in, which further increases your exposure and trust. And before long, some people will share them specifically to get your attention and approval.

As you earn authority and trust through effective public relations, you create a powerful snowball effect where the opportunities you earn then lead to even more opportunities, and typically, in addition to the frequency increasing, the size of these opportunities grows as well.

It's also worth noting that it's important to have systems in place to capitalize on this.

The initial exposure from a piece of publicity going live is awesome, but it's wasted if you can't turn it into potential clients. So to get the most impact from your public relations efforts, you'll

need to ensure that your websites, marketing funnels, and retargeting ads are all on point so that when someone looks you up after seeing you featured in the media, you can bring them into your marketing ecosystem. Remember — we're all bombarded by a constant barrage of marketing messages everywhere we turn, every single day, so almost no one is going to become a client after seeing you featured somewhere just once. In order to cut through the noise, you'll have to maintain top of mind awareness with prospects until they're ready to make a buying decision.

## Do it yourself or have it done for you?

Should you handle your own public relations or hire a publicist? That depends on your situation, skills, mindset, and budget.

If you're naturally a people person, don't mind rejection, and have a lot of time available to commit to your own public relations, then you may want to handle it yourself. And depending on your budget, you may be forced into a position where you have to do it yourself anyway.

The truth is I kind of like it when people try their own public relations because once they realize how much work it takes and how difficult it is, they tend to make much better clients.

It's not just about the difficulty and amount of work that goes into this. It's also about the relationships.

This may surprise you, but journalists aren't just sitting around waiting for you to email them about why they should feature you. Most are already overworked and buried under a tsunami of pitches from faceless strangers in their inbox. So yours is unlikely to even be noticed in the first place.

I'll share an example that highlights this fact...

A while back, I had introduced a friend and fellow publicist to a television news anchor I knew well. She had a great story about a client that she wanted to get featured on a local news network. And the story was a perfect fit for her show.

This publicist was incredibly experienced and skilled, but no matter what she did, she couldn't get this particular anchor to respond. So after a few weeks, she mentioned it to me, and I asked her if she wanted me to reach out to the anchor.

When I emailed the anchor, I got a yes that day.

That happened because of my relationship with her.

Think about it — you probably get a ton of emails too, right? I get 200-300 on any given day. Some journalists I know get upwards of 500 emails.

But what happens when you get an email from a friend? If you're anything like most people, you probably open it before opening emails from strangers.

That's exactly what happened here.

Building strong relationships with the media is essential, but that takes a lot of time and effort. And it's difficult because you're only pitching for yourself, so if you engage with them often enough to become recognized, there's a good chance you'll be pitching yourself too often, so you'll annoy them.

When that happens, they won't open your emails. And if they regularly delete your emails without opening them, the algorithms that filter out spam will assume your emails are spam and send them directly to the spam folder. Now they're unlikely to see them ever again.

It's different for publicists because we can pitch for multiple clients, so we can engage more frequently without becoming annoying.

You can handle your own public relations, but you'll need to be aware of what goes into it and how long it will take.

But if you're running an established business, and you have a unique skill set that requires knowledge that most people don't have, it's probably not a smart use of your time to handle public relations yourself.

This way, you can focus on the best use of your time, while a publicist gets you featured in the media more quickly and efficiently than you ever could on your own. It's a win/win scenario.

So you absolutely can handle your own public relations, and in some cases you may be forced to by budgetary constraints. But it's always better for you to hire an experienced publicist if you're serious about getting significant results.

It's important to note that there are situations where you absolutely should not handle your own public relations. This is especially true when it comes to handling a public relations crisis.

That's because a single mistake can exponentially multiply the damage that a public relations crisis can cause.

You could easily make what seems to be a completely good-intentioned statement that gets misinterpreted or taken out of context. That's especially easy in today's "torches and pitchforks" world of social media.

Here's a perfect example. The CEO of a national franchise, who was not my client at the time, was in the midst of a PR crisis after nineteen franchisees left and tried to organize a class action lawsuit against the franchisor.

During an hour-long interview, the CEO and a reporter from a prominent media outlet discussed a wide range of topics, including the lawsuit and accusations behind it.

When the article was published, it completely demonized the CEO and his company. But the more damaging part was that the reporter only quoted one sentence, taken completely out of context, which made it sound like he was saying the franchisees' accusations were true.

This single sentence, inaccurately reported, caused millions in lost revenue and nearly destroyed the company. All because he didn't have experience in responding to the media.

It takes considerable training and experience to respond on the fly in a way that minimizes opportunities for journalists to misrepresent, either accidentally or intentionally, your words.

I can even count how many times I've seen not just random trolls on social media, but also journalists at top media outlets completely misrepresent what someone said. And as the literary figure, Jonathan Swift wrote in "The Examiner" in 1710, "Falsehood flies, and the truth comes limping after it."

In other words, those with bigger platforms than you, along with mobs of random trolls with an agenda to push can and will distort the slightest mistake, causing immense reputational damage to your business. It can take years to recover from that — if you recover at all.

This is heightened by the fact that in the midst of a crisis, you're not going to be thinking as clearly as usual. You're probably scared, stressed, and angry, and that leads to poor decisions.

In addition to helping you avoid mistakes in the midst of a public relations crisis, a good publicist can also help you to quickly secure positive media coverage to offset the negative publicity. In some cases, they may even be able to get negative content removed.

## PR etiquette

I know, I know...you're a rule breaker. A maverick. You do your own thing and don't have time for silly things like etiquette. You're all about results and you're willing to do whatever it takes to get them.

But here's the thing — when you do certain things wrong in public relations, you poison the well. Treat a journalist badly and you won't just lose that opportunity, you'll likely ensure they send all of your future emails directly to the spam folder. Depending on their mood that day and how badly you treated them, they may even call you out by name in one of the many private groups we belong to. If that happens, you're unlikely to get a response from any journalists who heard about that.

So this is probably one of the most important parts of the book.

The first and most important thing I want you to learn here is that the media—journalists, producers, editors, anchors, etc., do not owe you anything.

They don't owe you a feature, an explanation as to why they won't feature you, or even a response.

Not a goddamned thing.

Their job is to create content their audience will consume. That's it.

If you can help them do that by pitching relevant story ideas in a way they can clearly see how it will benefit their audience, you will win.

Unfortunately, I see too many people approach public relations from the perspective of "ME, ME, ME!"

Them: "Hi, Mr. Journalist, do you know how awesome I am?! Well I am and you should tell everyone about it! Hey, I emailed you yesterday and didn't hear back! Do you have any idea how many people need to hear what I have to say? I'm awesome! Hey, just following up... Sending a reminder... Are you getting my emails? Why aren't you answering me? Hello?! It's your job to answer me! You better answer me or I'm going to blast you on social media! You're a fraud! Hey, just following up again...when are you going to feature me?"

I wish I was exaggerating, but this kind of thing happens every day. Not everyone is quite this bad about it, but many are rude and entitled in their behavior towards people in the media.

There's something else you need to understand if you want to earn positive media coverage...

Everyone in the media is overworked on a massive scale because the industry has faced dramatic changes as the internet has evolved. This is critical to understand because it impacts your public relations efforts.

To remain competitive, media outlets now have to produce more content than ever before, and most people today expect that content to be available online for free, as opposed to paying for a magazine or newspaper like we used to do. I don't know about you, but back in the day, I used

to have a subscription to the three major newspapers in Tampa, as well Entrepreneur, Forbes, Fast Company, and Inc magazines. Today, I don't subscribe to any print publications.

I do have digital subscriptions to several media outlets, including Entrepreneur, Insider, and every one of the regional editions of the Business Journals, to name a few. In total, I subscribe to about sixty different media outlets, but I do that primarily as a way to support the outlets and more importantly, the journalists they employ.

I encourage you to do the same. After all, these media outlets and their employees are providing a valuable service that benefits you directly.

Most people don't do that though.

This has forced media outlets to do more with less, which unfortunately, often falls squarely on the shoulders of the hard working journalists, anchors, editors, producers, and others responsible for creating content.

In other words, when you hound that journalist who isn't responding to you, it's a lot like tugging on a firefighter's jacket while he's trying to put out a raging warehouse fire to ask him to get your cat out of a tree. All you're going to do is piss that journalist off and ensure they never feature you.

I encourage you to put yourself in their shoes.

I know it can be frustrating to send pitch after pitch and not only not get featured, but often, not even get a response. This is just part of the process. It happens to all of us no matter how skilled and experienced we are. Hell, I recently had an extreme case of this with a media contact who I've known well for years, speak with frequently, and consider a friend.

I had pitched this editor a story, got a "yes," and then I was ghosted for over two months. During that time, I called, emailed, DMed...I did basically everything except send a carrier pigeon. (If I had one, I would have used that too.)



Imagine how I felt — the editor said they wanted to feature my client, the article was completed and we knew when it was supposed to be published, but when I tried to follow up about when I could expect to see it live, I got nothing but crickets.

Then I finally got a response.

The company she worked for had lost an editor at one of the other media outlets under its umbrella, so she now had to pull double duty editing both publications — each had a print and digital version. And this all happened right as both outlets were about to publish the latest issue. If you've never worked in the magazine industry, I can assure you it's chaotic in general, but it's absolute madness when you get close to the publication date because there are a lot of moving parts and so many things that can go wrong.

So if this can happen to me as an experienced publicist with a media contact whom I know well, what do you think is going to happen when you, with little to no experience, pitch a story to a stranger?

You should expect crickets. Often.

You need to understand and accept the situation. And hopefully in doing that, you'll find it easier to be more patient with those in the media.

They aren't ignoring you because they think you're an asshole. (Unless you actually are an asshole, in which case, get a therapist and work on yourself.) They're just overworked and stressed out.

That being said, here's what you absolutely need to know about PR etiquette:

### Pitching

Skip the bullshit. There's no need for pleasantries or empty compliments. Let's be honest — you don't really care how their day is going and you haven't been following their writing for years. You know it and they know it.

Instead, get right to the point with a hook that grabs their attention, segue into the meat of your pitch, and close with a powerful call to action. If you have one, feel free to attach a press kit.

That's it.

I'm laughing right now because as I write this, I'm imagining you saying, "What the fuck, Jeremy? That doesn't give me enough information to learn how to write an effective pitch!"

I know. That comes later, and we'll break down every step in detail. But for now we're just talking about the etiquette of your pitch because if you don't get that right, nothing else will matter.

Follow up

Most people in the media get more email than you can possibly imagine. In addition to the internal emails they get from coworkers, they also get pitches from countless entrepreneurs and publicists because their addresses are listed in PR databases, and often, on the websites of the outlets they work for. That adds up fast.

So while it may be tempting to send that follow-up email when you think they haven't responded fast enough, you probably need to wait. And then you probably need to wait some more

In most cases, you should wait a week before following up. Sometimes longer. There may be times when it makes sense to follow up sooner, as is the case with breaking news, but that's rare. And in most cases, what you think is "breaking news" almost certainly isn't.

Launching a new product, publishing a book, or winning an award, is not breaking news unless your company is an industry giant or you're a nationally-recognized public figure. You are not Elon Musk or Kim Kardashian. (Unless you are, in which case, Elon, give me a call — I'd love to chat.)

Breaking news is something that just happened or is about to happen, will affect a majority of people in an outlet's audience, and is something that most of them will genuinely care about.

Here are some examples of breaking news:

- A new or proposed law, or the repeal or proposed repeal of an existing law
- A *world-changing* invention (the internet, blockchain, virtual reality, a cure for cancer — you get the idea here)
- A safety flaw in a product
- An IPO (Initial Public Offering) or a major acquisition, disposition, or bankruptcy of a well-known company
- A security vulnerability in a product or software
- A lawsuit involving a well-known company and/or someone famous
- A major crime, in terms of size, tactics, or people involved
- A significant change in a trend, such as inflation, suicide, or unemployment rates
- A change in leadership of a well-known company

If your pitch isn't related to something on that list, it's probably not breaking news.

## Automation

I love technology for the ways it can improve efficiency and productivity. But I hate the way it's often abused by shitty publicists and marketers.

If you're thinking about setting up automation to send a follow-up series of emails after your initial pitch, stop where you are and immediately jam your thumb in your eye. Hopefully, the pain will be severe enough that it serves as a reminder well into the future to never do that.

Look, if your story was a fit, you would have received a reply. So if you didn't get a reply, it wasn't a fit. No amount of additional emails will change that. But by continuing to blast out a series of impersonal and increasingly annoying emails, all you'll do is destroy any chance of getting featured.

There are some ways to use automation properly, though.

One automation tool I use religiously is Boomerang for Gmail. This is a simple browser extension that makes it easy to stay on top of important emails without clogging up your inbox.

You can use Boomerang to tuck an email away into a special folder temporarily but return it to the top of your inbox at a particular time and date. Let me be clear — do not use this to continue pushing an unresponsive media contact.

This is a powerful tool for staying on top of communications, and more importantly, nurturing relationships with your media contacts.

Here's the cold, hard truth — most of your pitches are going to fail, but rather than simply throwing up your hands in desperation and moving on to the next media contact, you should stay in regular contact with them. When you provide real value to them, this strategy creates name recognition, increasing the chances of your emails being recognized and turning future pitches into media coverage.

This is easier said than done.

Real value isn't constantly sending pitches or asking "are you working on anything you can include me in yet?"

Providing real value is about making their job easier and making their efforts more effective.

That might include sending them tips on breaking news stories, sharing and commenting on their articles or videos on social media, or even helping them find sources from your network. But don't bother keeping score. It's not a transaction, you're building a relationship.

Personally, I'm a big fan of collaboration. I believe when we help each other we all benefit. This is something I do regularly. I have numerous journalists, editors, anchors, and producers who reach out to me when they need a source because they know I have a large network and can connect them with an expert on just about anything. Often, these sources are not my clients. I don't care. I don't charge either party because in helping my media contacts, I'm also indirectly helping myself and my clients.

Sometimes I benefit directly. Other times, I'm just helping others and putting good karma into the world. Either way, I win by helping them win.

## Paying to be featured

Public relations is hard work. There's a lot to do purely from a technical perspective — you have to distill a compelling story, craft a powerful pitch, and present an authoritative image online. On top of all that, you also have to deal with the people side of the business. You have to cut through the noise to get a journalist's attention, build and nurture a relationship, and contend with the news cycle.

So it's understandable that you might be tempted to look for shortcuts. And the most common shortcut I see people try to take is offering to pay a journalist to feature them.

Never do this. Ever. It's both unethical and insulting.

That would be like seeing an attractive woman at the bar and offering to pay her to go home with you. How well do you think that would turn out? Unless you're hanging out in the red light district, I think it's safe to say you'd probably end up with a drink thrown in your face.

It's the same with journalists.

By offering to pay them to feature you, you're basically telling them you believe their integrity can be purchased. On top of that, you're putting their career in jeopardy because the mere accusation of engaging in this kind of behavior can result in them being fired and blacklisted in the industry.

So by asking to be featured in exchange for payment, no matter how large or small, you're telling that journalist that you don't respect or give a damn about them.