

PR Strategy Workbook

— WORKBOOK —

Answer these key questions to uncover
the information you'll need to develop an effective
public relations strategy!

SPARTAN
COMMUNITY



SPARTAN MEDIA

What problem do you solve?

When asked, "What do you do?" most people simply respond with their profession, which makes them sound like a commodity.

Instead, demonstrate your uniqueness and explain the value you provide by explaining the problem you solve by doing what you do.

When you take this approach, you'll have a better shot at crafting a pitch that catches a journalist's attention.

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What impact does your solution typically have for your clients?

Focusing on what you do is of little interest to anyone but you, however, people are interested in the impact that what you do can have in their lives.

To leverage this psychological phenomenon you need to unpack what that typically looks like in objective, quantifiable terms that people outside your industry can easily understand.

This helps set you apart from competitors and makes your story more compelling to the media.

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Who, precisely, do you serve?

"We serve everyone," is the rally cry for entrepreneurs that blend in, and as a result, never get featured in the media.

When you focus on a very specific clientele, you will attract those people, but you'll also repel everyone else—and that's a great thing. Both for getting featured in the media and for business in general.

Doing so helps you (and your pitch) stand out and become an interesting story to the right media outlets.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Why have you chosen to focus on that specific niche?

People with a mission tend to attract more attention than those who don't have one.

Commitment, especially to something bigger than yourself, is exciting. It's rare. And it helps you stand out from others in your industry.

This is known as your “why” and positions you as an ideal source for the media in stories related to that niche.

What makes you uniquely qualified to serve this particular niche?

It doesn't mean much to serve a particular niche just because its a good opportunity, so you need to demonstrate why you are uniquely qualified.

This will typically come from a negative experience you or a loved one has faced as a member of that niche.

When you can explain how you've overcome the same challenges people in that niche are facing and what you learned from it that will help them, your story becomes more interesting to the media.

What do you do differently than your competitors?

The media’s business model relies on attention, so it’s important to demonstrate how you’re different.

Maybe you have a unique process, proprietary technology, or a special relationship with a high profile entity or person.

This kind of differentiation, when presented effectively, can give your pitch a powerful edge that helps you get featured in the media.

What misconceptions do people have about your industry?

People who aren't part of a particular industry will always have misconceptions about it because they see it from a distance.

Dispelling these misconceptions is exactly the kind of stories media outlets love to publish because they drive tons of engagement and ad revenue.

The key is being able to correct these misconceptions in a way the average person can understand, without coming off as arrogant or condescending.

What mistakes do you often see people in your industry make?

Every industry has common mistakes, and in some industries, these mistakes can have disastrous effects on the people who make them.

This is another type of content media outlets love to publish because it also drives a lot of engagement and ad revenue.

To leverage this, you need to be able to explain the mistakes and what people should do instead.

How do those mistakes impact people who make them?

If a mistake doesn't have a significant negative impact, people will quickly lose interest in stories about them.

The secret to conveying the seriousness of a particular mistake is to explain exactly what happens when someone makes that mistake in quantifiable terms, without unnecessary hype.

When you can do that, you'll have a story that most media outlets would love to cover.

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What is wrong in your industry that you're working to change?

Identify something you know is wrong in your industry that you are actively working to change.

But be careful here—it's really easy to fall into the trap of simply bashing practices, companies, and people in your industry in an attempt to drum up interest in your message.

The key here is to unemotionally identify the problem and propose a solution that benefits the media outlet's audience.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

How is your industry evolving?

As your industry changes, opportunities to get featured will inevitably come up.

As a leader in your industry, you have front row seats to this evolution, and you can leverage this to pitch yourself as an expert on what's happening. It's important to skip the hype, though.

These forward thinking stories tend to be well received by the media because they attract a lot of attention, from both people who agree and those who don't.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slightly textured appearance and is set against a dark background.

How should people adapt to this evolution?

It's not enough to just know what's changing—people need to also know what to do about that change.

This means you need to explain exactly how to adapt to these changes so people can avoid getting blindsided by them.

By sharing your expert advice, you're helping a media outlet's audience, making this kind of story particularly appealing to journalists.

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What are some of your most significant achievements over the past 5 years?

This is less about bragging, and more about quantifying your expertise and impact.

Generally speaking, journalists aren't going to write glowing stories about your achievements unless you're running a massive company, but you can use condensed versions of these stories in your pitches and interviews.

Your achievements can go a long way in reinforcing your authority status when pitching the media.

What are some of your most significant failures over the past 5 years?

This humanizes you and gives you an opportunity to explain something you've learned from your failures.

As with your achievements, journalists usually won't write stories specifically about your failures, but you can use condensed versions of these stories in your pitches and interviews.

It's important to avoid overemphasizing your failures though, because that can quickly create the wrong perception of you and your brand.

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If you had the power to change anything in your industry, what would it be and why?

People expect leaders to be change makers and improve the world around them.

Highlighting what you would change in your industry gives you an opportunity to highlight your expertise, critical thinking, and leadership—all critical aspects of being seen as an authority in your industry.

The key here is to frame this from the perspective of serving your industry and its clients.

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