

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS



**A POWERFUL PR PLAN
THAT BRINGS YOU PROFITS**

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"If a young man tells his date how handsome, smart and successful he is – that's advertising. If the young man tells his date she's intelligent, looks lovely, and is a great conversationalist, he's saying the right things to the right person and that's marketing. If someone else tells the young woman how handsome, smart and successful her date is – that's PR."

S. H. Simmons



INTRODUCTION

Ask the average person how they view public relations and you'll likely hear one of two basic ideas:

1. Public relations firms and departments help large corporations deal with a crisis that gives the public a negative opinion of them.
2. The same as #1 but insert a famous person in the place of "large corporations". This could be an actor, politician, musician, broadcaster, athlete, or other well-known individual.

However, public relations are much more than that. While the average business owner doesn't own a company large enough to employ a full-time public relations staff, public relations is still important, even for a small business.

Public relations are the core of any business.

How the public views you and your business have a huge impact on the success of your business.

If you're a startup looking for investors or a loan, PR is critical to the success of securing financing.

The differentiation between public relations, advertising, and marketing is arguable at best.

It can easily be argued that marketing and advertising are under the umbrella of public relations, because those two things have an impact on how the public views the company.

They also impact how the public views the owner of that company, too.

People are always making judgments. When a company does something the public dislikes, it makes the owner look bad. When the owner is perceived in a negative light, the business suffers a similar fate.

Since the public is always judging, it's necessary to give them a good impression as often as possible. This doesn't happen randomly or on accident. It must be managed.

Every customer you serve either has a positive or a negative opinion of you. They talk to others, and the messages they are spreading are either positive or negative.

Mastering public relations means that you have taken the greatest possible control over how your customers view your company and you. **You're in the best possible position to influence them, put out any fires quickly, and grow your business maximally.**

You're also enhancing your position within your industry and your community.

Lastly, your employees are influenced by your public relations activities. How you deal with your customers and the public influences how your employees view your company, you, and

themselves. Remember, everyone is always watching.

Here's what you can expect to learn in this guide:

1. **CHAPTER 1: Know Your Audience.** This chapter will demonstrate the value of understanding and remembering those that are making judgements about your company. Knowing and understanding your audience will allow you to optimize your image and your company's image.
2. **CHAPTER 2: Using Social Media as a PR Tool.** Social media is a blessing for business owners. It provides a way of easily connecting with customers and sharing information. You'll learn the basics of taking control of your social media presence.
3. **CHAPTER 3: How to Get Yourself Into the Media.** Telling people that your company is great is one thing. Getting

someone else to do it for you is much better!

4. **CHAPTER 4: Reputation Management.** Even small companies will benefit from managing their reputations.
5. **CHAPTER 5: The First Steps.** You've learned a lot. Now it's time to begin putting it into action. The first steps can be the hardest, but everyone has to start somewhere.
6. **CHAPTER 6: The Next Steps.** You have a foundation. Let's take it to the next level!



"A reputation takes years and years and years to build, and it takes one press of a button to ruin it. Don't let that happen to you. You've done so much work; you've put in so much effort. Don't let one moment ruin your entire life because you wanted to be funny or you were mad or because you had a mood."

J. J. Watt

CHAPTER 1: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

You can't be successful if you don't know your audience. Who is your audience?

- Clients and customers
- General public

Customers

Every business, whether it's a dental practice, a hardware store, a paper clip manufacturer, consulting firm, tax attorney, or artist has customers or clients. You're selling a product or service to someone.

Consider whom you are selling to and what type of business owner that customer or client wants to work with.

For example, the best public image for a tax attorney is probably different from that of an artist. You'd probably prefer your business's tax attorney was visibly successful, wore a suit, was fastidious, and didn't sport a \$9 haircut.

That same look might do well for someone that produces avant garde sculptures for a living.

Also consider what type of business appeals to your typical client or customer. If you help churches raise money, your business had better have a conservative and clean-cut image. Cold-blooded ruthlessness is often seen as an admirable trait in divorce attorneys.

Present the best image of yourself to your customers and clients with these strategies:

- 1. Determine the perfect business owner from the perspective of your customers and clients.** What type of business

owner do your customers and clients want to work with? Consider your:

- Personality characteristics
- Style of dress
- Involvement in the community
- What kind of car would this ideal business owner drive?

Keep in mind, depending on your business, the customers and clients might not be particularly concerned with you. They might not even know your name, depending on the size and nature of your business. If that's the case, you can largely take a pass on this one.

2. **Which of those traits are you lacking?**

Do you need to work on your appearance? Become more involved in your community? Enhance your self-

confidence? Become a better public speaker?

3. **How can you begin demonstrating those traits?** Consider the important traits that you're lacking and begin working on developing them.

- Buy a new suit or other wardrobe items.
- Drive a newer car.
- Join a gym.
- Join Toastmasters.
- Speak more clearly and loudly.
- Take a sales course.
- Learn your product line better.
- Volunteer.

- Book some time with a psychologist.
 - Be more punctual.
 - Engage with your clients and customers more frequently.
 - Develop a stronger handshake.
4. **Which of those traits do you already possess?** No one is perfect, but you probably already have a few of the necessary traits that make your customers and clients eager to do business with you. Make a list of the traits that you feel pretty good about.
5. **How can you magnify those traits even more?** Run with your strengths. If your clients love your confidence, consider taking it up another notch. You might be super reliable and responsive, but maybe you could be doing even better.

Depending on the type of business you own, your customers' and clients' opinions of you can be critical. If you're a lawyer, doctor, accountant, or consultant, you are your business.

It really depends on how much contact you have with the people that purchase from you or hire you.

Keep these tips in mind to present the best possible image of your company to your customers and clients:

1. **Determine the attributes the ideal business would have from the perspective of your customers and clients.** Here are a few characteristics to consider:
 - Location
 - Physical appearance

- Reliability
- Integrity
- Employees
- Marketing
- Sales processes
- Delivery
- Customer service
- Viability (Your customers and clients want to know that you'll be around for a long time.)

2. **Which areas does your company need to strengthen?** Take your list and compare your company to it. Where are you coming up short?

3. **How can you begin to change it?** Create a plan for shoring up your weaknesses.

4. **Can you take your business's positive qualities to the next level?** You've probably heard of the restaurant chain Chick-fil-A. One thing they're known for is their fast and unique drive-thru service. Instead of just enjoying that reputation, they took things a step further.
 - They shut down many of their restaurants and reconfigured the restaurants and parking lots to support a new and improved drive-thru process.

 - What does your company do well that it can do even better?

Allow your company to put its best foot forward. Think about the most successful competitors in your industry. **What attributes do those companies have that your company**

lacks? Do some research and be honest with yourself.

“People think they need to hire someone to do their PR, but 99 percent of PR in the early stages is stuff you can do yourself. It's just like business development - there's the warm-up intro, followup to build relationships, then add something of value.”

Michael Seibel

Public

While your customers and clients ultimately pay the bills, the general public's opinion of your company can matter, too. The people your business serves don't want to be associated

with a company that is viewed negatively by the public.

When the public is upset with a company, the impact on that company can be devastating. You might have the best plumbing business in town, but if one of your employees is caught kicking a customer's dog and it winds up on the news, you're in for a rough ride.

Does your company have an overgrown lawn? Is the paint peeling off the building? Do your employees run around town looking like they haven't seen soap and water for a few days?

Or is your company known as a great employer with great employees? Is your company doing good things in your neighborhood or city?

What about yourself? How does the public view you? Are you grumpy in public? Do you volunteer, and if so, does anyone know about it?

Consider how the public views you:

1. What is your reputation in your community?

- Do you pay your employees fairly?
- Are you a kind boss?
- Are you easy to get along with?
- Are you known for participating in charitable events or causes?

2. What are the negative qualities you have from the perspective of the average person in your town?

- Are you cheap?
- Rude?
- Always late to church?
- Bad tipper?

- Loudmouth at the local baseball games?
 - Mean to your spouse or children?
 - Throw rocks at dogs in your yard?
 - Yell at the neighborhood kids?
 - Drive recklessly through your neighborhood?
 - Have troubles with the local police?
3. **Start working on that list.** Address each one of these items and be sure to demonstrate the change publicly.
- You know what most people consider to be a good person. Consider acting that way as you go about your time in public.
4. **Be a good community member.** If you want to take things to the next level,

don't stop at striving to be a decent person. Strive to be an exceptional community member.

- Be the most courteous person you know.
- Get involved in the community.
- Be social.
- Donate money or your time or both.

Consider how the public views your company:

1. **Does your community like your company?** Is the general feeling about your company positive or negative? Why?

- What can you do to make the perception of your business more positive?

2. **What does your company do for your community other than make money for providing goods or services?** What can you do to enhance the image of your company?

Consider what matters and how you can improve it. That's all it takes.

The perception is all that matters in the end.

You might be wonderful, but if people think you're a jerk, you're stuck dealing with the fallout of being a jerk.

The same goes for your company. If people think your company is great, then it's great. Even if it really isn't. Do your best to create the best possible image you can of yourself and your company.

In time, you want to have a great company that is viewed by others as being great too!

“PR means telling the truth and working ethically – even when all the media want is headlines and all the public wants is scapegoats. Public relations fails when there is no integrity.”

Viv Segal



CHAPTER 2: USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PR TOOL

Your social media presence should be a priority regardless of the size of your company. **Even if you're so behind the curve that you don't even have a website, people are still talking about your company.**

If you're not leveraging social media to the best of your ability, you're missing out on a major opportunity to influence the opinions of others about your company.

Your Website

Does your website present your company in an advantageous way? What does your website say about you? Have you even looked at your website in the last couple of years?

Many websites have one of the following obvious flaws:

1. **It's out of date.** Websites can be out of date in many ways:
 - Old, outdated layout. There are still websites out there that were created in the 1990's, and they look like they were created in the 1990's.
 - It contains information that is no longer accurate. Your company changes, so your website should change, too.
 - Broken links. Broken links are annoying to the users that click on them. It also suggests a lack of conscientiousness on the part of the company.
2. **There's not a readily apparent way to contact the company.** Does your

website include an email address or phone number so people can contact your business? If you choose to make it difficult for people to make contact, it says something about your business. Is that the image you wish to portray?

3. **The address of the company on the website.** It's surprising how many small businesses, like coffee shops and beauty salons, forget to put an address on their website. It makes it harder for customers to give money to your business. It also makes you look foolish.
4. **It's not updated regularly.** It's not just Google that likes fresh content. Every business should be updating their website with new content on at least a monthly basis.
5. **The purpose isn't defined.** It's not enough to just "have a website". A website is a great opportunity. What are

you trying to accomplish with your website? What was the goal in creating it?

Your website is the business card of your business. **It's the first thing that many of your potential customers and clients see.** Make a bad impression and you may never see that person again.

Use these techniques to boost the PR value of your website:

1. **Consider the message your website sends about you and your company.**
What is the image you want to present to the world? Your website is often the first impression people have about you and your business. Ensure that it says what you want it to say.
2. **Consider the purpose of your website.**
What is the intention of your website? Is it to get people to hire you? Purchase a product online? Schedule a free

consultation call? Sign up for your newsletter? Are you trying to build an email list?

- What are the actions you want visitors to your website to take?
- Build or modify your website with a specific purpose in mind.

3. **Your website must be mobile friendly.**

Watch anyone for more than three minutes and they're likely to at least glance at their phone. It's quite simple to create a website that will function properly on any smartphone. You're losing a lot of customers and engagement if you don't make it easy to use on their smartphone or tablet.

4. **Update your website on a regular schedule.** This doesn't have to take a lot of time.

- You could mention the new variety of donut you're selling this week.
- Post of photo of the construction of your new warehouse.
- Let the world know that you're supporting the local Girl Scouts troop.
- Write something meaningful about your company or industry.

5. **Once a month, ask yourself, "What can I do to make my website better?"**.

Schedule this each month and make an improvement to your website. A few months of incremental improvements will make a big difference.

Go through your website and do an update. Make it more attractive and functional. It shouldn't take too long unless you've neglected it for a long time. **Be certain that it**

helps your visitors and boosts the perception of your business. It's not enough to have a website. Have a good one.

“Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing.”

John. D. Rockefeller

Facebook

Facebook has literally billions of active users. That's a lot of eyeballs that could be looking at you and your company. Most businesses can get a lot of benefit from a well-managed Facebook profile.

If you're a consultant or own a smaller business, Facebook is critical to growing your business at the fastest possible rate.

Facebook, and social media in general, provide an opportunity to be a little less formal than might be proper for a company website. Facebook provides a better means of connecting on a deeper level than any website can provide.

Facebook has many PR-related advantages for small and large businesses alike:

1. **Increase brand awareness.** Facebook is the ideal platform for sharing information about your brand, company, and products.
2. **Increase community engagement.** Ultimately, you can end up with a lot of followers willing to listen to what you have to say. It's a great platform for clearing up any negative news,

announcing positive news, revealing new products and services, or making people smile.

3. **Boost sales.** The more good things people know about your products and services, the more sales you're likely to make. Facebook ads can also be very effective for generating sales.
4. **Generate leads.** Leads and sales go hand in hand. Perhaps some people aren't ready to purchase from you or to hire you just yet. Facebook can be a wonderful place to gather leads.
5. **Boost web traffic.** People that visit your Facebook page can become web traffic, too. Google likes to see a site with increasing traffic. It also prefers sites with strong social signals.
6. **Gather demographic information.** Facebook makes it easy to see who is visiting your page. They won't give you

a name and contact information, but you can see a lot of demographic information.

With all the benefits that Facebook provides, it's the best place for most businesses to start. **Of course, this is after the company website is in order.** Most of the other social media platforms can wait.

“There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.”

Oscar Wilde

Tips for posting content on Facebook:

1. **Understand what your social audience wants to see from a business.** Popular items include:
 - Links to additional information about products and services
 - Images of products
 - Videos of products and services
 - Give people what they want!
2. **Be proactive.** Avoid waiting for people to show up to your Facebook profile and engage with you. Be proactive and post relevant content regularly. Use your website and other social media to drive traffic to your Facebook profile.
3. **Be responsive.** There are only so many hours in a day but do your best to respond to questions and statements

that are worthy of a response.

4. **Keep your brand and/or business in mind.** Does your content present your business, brand, products, and services in a favorable light?

5. **What does the reader or viewer get from your content?** What is the reward they will receive? Amusement? Valuable product or service information? A discount? A free offer?
 - If all your visitors receive is boredom or the feeling that they wasted their time, they'll be less likely to hire you, buy from you, or visit your Facebook page again.

6. **The best content has a call to action.**
This could include:
 - Setting up a strategy session

- Buying a product or service
- Requesting more information
- A free guide
- Ask for an opinion or advice
- Ask them to tell their friends and family about your company

Learn how to optimize your presence on Facebook. There is so much to be gained by this powerful platform. **Valuable, consistently posted content can do a lot for your company!** Facebook is also a great way to engage with your company's audience and handle criticism quickly and effectively.

Facebook might be the ultimate social media platform for most businesses. You can grow your business, share new products, interact with customers and clients, and perform basic customer service.

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.”

Warren Buffet

Other Social Media Platforms

There are more social media platforms than Facebook. In fact, there are more than any single person can possibly manage and maintain on their own.

Here are just few for consideration in order from most users to least:

1. **YouTube.** Share all the videos you want to create. You can generate a lot of activity on YouTube if you gain a

following.

2. **WhatsApp.** This messaging app allows businesses to provide customer support, give updates, and communicate in general.
3. **Instagram.** This platform allows video and photo sharing.
4. **Tumblr.** Tumblr is a social networking site. It's a hybrid of a blog and a photo sharing site.
5. **TikTok.** This is mostly short music videos up to 60 seconds in length. It's popular with teens and pre-teens.
6. **Twitter.** If you want to get information out in real time, this is one of the best options. You can send mass messages to your followers. The messages are also posted on your twitter account for the world to see.

7. **Reddit.** A place for generating conversation. Users can submit photos, ideas, links, and questions, and ask for opinions.
8. **Viber.** Another messaging app. You can also promote your business, provide customer service, and display your products and services.
9. **LinkedIn.** This site started as a way to post your resume and look for a job. It's now much more. You can engage with industry experts, post content, and build your brand.
10. **Snapchat.** Similar to Instagram.
11. **Pinterest.** Think of Pinterest as a scrapbooking site for photos and ideas. It's a great platform for users that want to be inspired.

Each of these has at least 250 million monthly active users. Several have at least a billion monthly active users.

Which of these are relevant to your business? That's going to depend on your business.

For example, if your audience is under 30-years old, Instagram is relevant. If you need to get messages out quickly to your followers, nothing beats Twitter.

However, it's unlikely that your corporate law clients are on TikTok unless they're interested in learning the latest tween dance moves.

This is an area that will require additional research on your part.

For most businesses, mastering Facebook first is the first social media priority. But, take a look at the others in your free time and think about which of the others might be useful.

What determines how much your social media presence influences others?

1. **The frequency of your activity.** If you're active once a day, you're going to see more benefit and activity in return versus if you post once a month. Studies have shown that a dead social media page is worse than no social media page.
 - Stay away from a social media platform if you can't be active on it regularly.
2. **The number of people that are paying attention.** The more people that see your content, the more people you can influence.
3. **The content itself.** Good content can accomplish a lot. Low-quality content isn't taken seriously, appreciated, or shared. Great content can accomplish miracles, with little else, if you're patient enough.

"I've gotten more press than any entrepreneur could dream of - certainly more than I deserve - and I've never had a public relations firm working for me."

Jason Calacanis



4. **The level of engagement of your audience.** You might have a large audience, but are they engaged? Do they care? What you want are people that show up to your social media pages regularly, comment on your content, and share it with others.

5. **The strength of your audience and their engagement specifically.** Not all visitors to your social media pages are created equal. It's simply a fact that some people have more influence in the world than others.
 - Having the mayor of your city as one of your followers probably boosts your influence more significantly than a follower that suffers in a cubical all day.

 - Everyone matters, but not everyone matters the same amount.

- Power and influence create additional power and influence. Powerful people are unlikely to follow a “nobody”. As you gain more influence, the more influential people in your world are likely to become interested in following you, too.

It’s not enough to merely have a social media presence. You can be on Facebook, but if no one is there to listen, it doesn’t matter. If people are listening, but you lack influence, it doesn’t matter. Build your presence and your influence.

A general social media strategy that works:

1. **Have epic content.** Don’t post worthless content just to post something. Ensure that your audience will get something valuable from spending their time on your content.

2. **Build a large network.** The more followers the better. The most reliable way to build a large network is to post high quality content on a regular basis and engage with your audience.

3. **Build a network that includes people that matter.** As you grow your social following, start reaching out to people of influence that could boost your influence further and your business.

4. **Post something meaningful on a regular basis.** Regular content is key. That means at least once a week. Three times a week is better.

5. **Always consider how your social media activity presents your company and yourself.** Everything you post leaves an impression. Ensure that it's the right one.
 - Avoid political statements, unless your demographics

"A reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep their eyes on the spot where the crack was."

Joseph Hall



suggest your comments will be highly supported by your audience. Even then, it's best to be highly cautious.

- Ditto for religion.
- Always ask yourself what impression your post will create.

We've discussed social media and your business, but what about you specifically? Should you personally have a social media presence?

It depends.

If you're a consultant or own a small business that has a physical store, then maybe.

Otherwise?

Probably not.

Ask yourself what having a personal social media presence will do for your business and your personal future. It might be exactly what your business requires to thrive. It could also be a waste of your valuable time.

It's also important to consider if you want to have a separate social media account for business and another for personal use. In most situations, it would be best to have a separate Facebook account that you use for friends and family and keep it under wraps.

CHAPTER 3: HOW TO GET YOURSELF INTO THE MEDIA

It's great that you can put yourself front and center on your own website or social media page. However, it can be much more effective if someone else does it. Especially, if that someone has a greater reach than you do.

Think about it.... If your date tells you how amazing they are, you're skeptical. But if someone else tells you how amazing your date is, you're more likely to believe it.

Get yourself and your business more media exposure with these strategies:

1. **Good content is hard to find.** Bloggers, journalists, reporters, and podcasters are looking for good content. Half of their job is finding good content. The

other half is delivering it.

- You have something interesting to present. Reach out to these people and let them know.

2. **Make your pitch.** Imagine that you own a coffee shop, and there is a story on the national news about a coffee bean shortage. Tell a media presenter about your opinion on that topic and ask them to do a story.

- Maybe you could talk about how your business handled the Covid-19 crises.
- Are you a divorce attorney? Talk about the changes in divorce rates during the pandemic. Or maybe there are new laws in your state related to divorce.
- It doesn't have to be related to a current event. Do you know

*"Some are born great, some achieve greatness,
and some hire public relations officers."*

Daniel J. Boorstin



something interesting or newsworthy? Share it.

- If you have something that will be interesting to people, journalists, bloggers, podcasters will be thrilled to hear from you.

3. **Pick the right person to approach.** A person that only covers sports-related news isn't going to be interested in the dangers of henna tattoos.

- However, your local newspaper might be interested.
- Someone that has a beauty secrets blog might be interested.
- Search for similar stories online and see who has covered them. Make a long list and contact them.

4. **Be prepared.** You can't just pitch a vague idea. You need facts. You need all your ducks in a row. You have to present more than just, "Hey, would you be interested in a story on the artistic value of balloon animals?" Present your case in detail.

5. **Consider the impact on yourself and your business.** What are the long-term consequences of this media exposure? What are you hoping to get out of it?
 - Will it grow or harm your business?

 - Will it help or harm you?

 - Do you expect to increase your sales? Grow web traffic? Be seen as an expert in your field?

 - What is the end result that you're seeking?

6. **Hit them up first thing in the morning.**
Send your email in the morning.
Surveys show that reporters and other full-time media-influencer folks are generally most receptive in the morning during the week.

7. **Use a good subject line.** It must pique the person's interest, but also be searchable. These people get a lot of emails. Ensure that yours is interesting and can be found again at a later date.
 - **Be practical.** A part-time, college-aged, social media phenom probably isn't getting out of bed at the crack of dawn. The evening is probably a much better bet.

8. **If your idea is accepted, ask for a link.**
Every link to your website or social media page helps, especially if it's from an authority. A link from CNN would do wonders for any website. You might not get it, but it never hurts to ask.

“Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.”

Abraham Lincoln



Regular people and small businesses get in the media all of the time. However, if you want positive exposure, you're going to have to go looking for it.

It's unlikely anyone is going to reach out to you and say, "Hey, I'd like to invite you on my podcast to talk about your business." But, if you contact 100 podcasters, they might take you up on your offer.

Be assertive and don't give up.

CHAPTER 4: REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

It's not just movie stars and Fortune 500 businesses that can benefit from reputation management. **Even small businesses can gain a lot from taking some basic steps toward managing their reputation.** The basics only take a few minutes each week, and the basics might be all that you need.

Use these tips to manage the reputation of your small business:

1. **The first step is to claim all of your business listings.** Your business is listed in various directories even if you never created the listing. Google, Yelp, and other services will create a listing for your business with or without your knowledge. There are three major listings to address:

- **Google:**
<https://www.google.com/business/>
- **Facebook:**
<https://business.facebook.com/>
- **Yelp:**
<https://biz.yelp.com/claim>
- If you don't have a listing, create one!
- Claiming these listings allows you to update the entries and list the correct information. Unclaimed listings often have incorrect information which can make your company look bad.

2. **Be active on social media.** We touched on social media earlier, but it's worth stating again. Regular and responsive social media activity can put you ahead of the reputation management game.

- The earliest complaints and concerns typically pop up on social media first. You can address them immediately and prevent things from getting out of hand.
3. **Be a sponsor in your community.** Every town has fundraisers, charity dinners, or holiday events. Ensure that your business has a presence at these events. You could be a sponsor, hand out promotional materials, or help with the setup and teardown.
 - Show that your business does more than just make money.

**People like to support
businesses that give back.**
 4. **Stay on top of your reviews.** The three business listings above can generate a lot of reviews about your company. It's important to monitor those reviews and respond to them appropriately.



"A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn your reputation by trying to do hard things well."

Jeff Bezos

- Ignoring a negative review is much more damaging than responding to it.

5. **Ask for reviews.** If you're certain that a customer or client has had a positive experience, ask them to leave a review. Request reviews with whatever method works best for your business.

- Text
- Email
- Ask in person. You can also hand out a card with the web address of the review website.

If you don't manage your reputation, it will be managed for you. A small business can potentially suffer more from a bad reputation than a large company. There's less of a cushion for smaller businesses.

Decide today to be proactive with your company's reputation.

CHAPTER 5: THE FIRST STEPS

It might seem like there's a lot to do. And, perhaps there is, but no one said that you had to do it all at once. Everything takes a fair amount of work to set up but maintaining it doesn't have to take a lot of time. Just bite off a little at a time and keep making progress. The rewards are worth the work.

Follow these steps for PR success:

1. **Claim or create your directory listings on the three primary platforms.** Google, Yelp, and Facebook. Ensure that the information is up to date.
2. **Review your website.** Address the following:
 - Repair broken links.

- Add some media. It could be a photo or a video.
- Ensure that your website presents the image that you want to project.
- If applicable, add one page of content. Do this once a month.
- Hire help if you need it.

3. **Enhance your image.** What is one thing you can work on this month?

- Is it your wardrobe?
- Punctuality?
- Demeanor?
- Responsiveness?
- Reliability?

- Sensitivity?
 - Customer service orientation?
4. **Do something in the community.** Get involved in your community in a positive and public way.
 - This is generally either about time or money. It's up to you. Just ensure that others know about it, or it doesn't count in the world of public relations.
 5. **Ask your customers for feedback.** Ask them what they like and don't like. Ask for suggestions.
 - Take the most common complaint and address it. Ensure that you inform your customers that you addressed it.
 6. **Start a Facebook page.** There are guides, free courses, paid courses,

websites, and books that cover Facebook in detail. There's no time like the present to get started.

- Look at your competitor's Facebook pages for ideas. Ask yourself what can be improved upon and make your page better than theirs.

That's a good start!

CHAPTER 6: THE NEXT STEP

You've gotten started. Your website is up to snuff. You have a Facebook profile for your business. Your business is listed in the three big directories, and you've updated the information. You've even worked on yourself and your business. Let's avoid losing that momentum!

Congratulations! You've already done more in the realm of PR than most small businesses.

It's time to move to the next level:

1. **Continue improving and adding to your website.** Just one article a month is all it takes. You can even hire someone to do this for you.
2. **Start asking for reviews.** Send your reviewers to those three sites: Google,

Yelp, and Facebook. Respond to negative reviews in a timely fashion.

3. **Choose another quality about yourself and work on it.** Repeat this until your spouse, clients, customers, and employees complain about how perfect you are.
4. **Stay on top of your Facebook responsibilities.** Perhaps you have an employee that's interested in handling this responsibility.
5. **Enhance your company in another way that improves your standing with your customers or the public.** Keep this up forever, too. Remember that you have the list of suggestions from customers.
6. **Start thinking of ways to get more publicity for yourself or your company.** One good news story, podcast, or interview could make a huge difference.

Final Tips

There's a lot more to public relations, and you should consider educating yourself further. But just the basics can take a fair amount of time and energy, both of which can be in short supply in entrepreneurs. Spend your time as necessary.

A few final tips to keep in mind:

1. **Continuously ask yourself, “How does this impact my customers’ and the public’s opinions of me and my company?”** This one habit can save you from a lot of grief. Remember to keep the long term in mind, too. Some decisions are great in the short term, but harmful in the long term.
2. **Include your employees.** You are judged by the attitude and behavior of your employees. Bring them up to speed with your new emphasis on public relations.

Include everyone.

3. **Delegate when necessary.** You don't have to do all of this alone. Include your employees, spouse, and anyone else that's competent and willing to help.
 - Many businesses have slow afternoons on Fridays. Keep your people busy.
4. **Be persistent.** PR isn't an annual spring cleaning. **It's a daily activity.** Stay on top of it

“There is no advertisement as powerful as a positive reputation traveling fast.”

Brian Koslow

CONCLUSION

Imagine you're on a date. You want to present your best self. Adopt the same attitude with your business.

All businesses can benefit from public relations. Your business might not have the need for a full-time person in this role, but basic PR techniques are still a necessity. Taking control of your company's reputation is good for business, your customer, your employees and yourself. Consider the image you want to project and begin projecting it. The world largely sees what you show it, so show it something good.

Fortunately, the basics don't take a lot of time to implement. Work on your PR during the commercials while watching TV at night. Get to work 15 minutes early each day and dedicate that time to public relations. Find an interested employee to help. **There's always a**

**way to take care of something this important
to your business.**

Get started today and watch your business's
reputation flourish!