Six Ways to Create Newsworthy Stories for the Trade Media

BY MATT SPAULDING

In today's competitive business landscape, brands must create newsworthy stories that capture the media's attention and attract the attention of targeted audiences. Compelling stories help you secure more media coverage, drive engagement, and build trust with customers, employees and other stakeholders. By following a few key strategies, you can develop newsworthy stories that make a lasting impact. Here are six tips that can help.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS, AUDIENCES AND MESSAGES

The first step in any process is clearly defining your goals, audiences and messages. Your goals could include: increasing brand awareness, driving sales, inviting people to an upcoming event, or positioning your brand as a thought leader. When it comes to your audience, it's important to know who exactly you're targeting. Are you seeking to reach C-level executives? Mid-level decision-makers? Potential influencers? Think of your audience target and try to identify what will resonate with them. Once you know your audiences, you can then create a list of the media outlets or podcasts that speak directly to those audiences.

Also, take time to determine the core brand messages you want to communicate through your stories. These should align with your brand's values, your goals, and the audiences you're trying to engage.

2. KNOW YOUR POINT OF VIEW

Does your company – or even a department within your company – have a point a view? Be sure to identify those POVs and how you do things differently. Your POV should challenge the status quo, raise provocative questions, or show where typical solutions (hint: competitors!) fall short. By finding and articulating your POV, your brand can be seen as a thought leader while providing new solutions to persistent industry challenges.

3. CREATE A STORY BANK

Take items #1 and #2 above and start to create a story bank. A story bank is a running list of potential story ideas you can use to engage publications, podcast producers, customers, and other key audiences. Creating a story bank involves systematically gathering, organizing, and refining story ideas that align with your brand's goals, audiences, messages and POV.

One way to start your story bank is to mark the times when your brand overcame challenges or achieved significant results for a customer. Start collecting these success stories and their details. Additionally, try scheduling regular brainstorming sessions with leaders from various departments, (sales, marketing, product development, customer service, etc.) to generate a greater list of story bank ideas and to get more people engaged.

4. ALIGN WITH TRENDS

Aligning your media story with an industry trend is a powerful strategy to ensure your content is timely, relevant, and appealing to the media, and to your target audience. You and/or your PR person or PR agency should regularly monitor industry news, reports, and studies to identify emerging trends. It's also a good idea to research the editorial calendars and media kits of the publications you want to be in. These editorial calendars will give you insight into what the media find newsworthy. And they can help you determine the topics that align with your story ideas. You can stay further informed using tools like Google Alerts, reading trade publications, listening to podcasts, and keeping up with industry happenings on social media, and at trade shows and conferences.

5. INCORPORATE ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Original research and data can make for a powerful news story. Including unique insights adds depth and credibility to the content, making it more attractive to trade publications. Research and data may include surveys, studies, or industry statistics that provide valuable insight and information for readers.

6. TAP INTO YOUR SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

It's likely that every organization has at least one subject matter expert. It's that person who is so knowledgeable on the industry, or your products, that they are an endless fountain of information. Find these people and work with them. Pull out all the information in their heads and categorize what they are experts on. Engage them on your plans to create newsworthy stories and communicate the important role they can play. In fact, they may have some excellent story ideas that you had not thought about!

Your subject matter experts are the people you can pitch and offer up for article interviews, podcast interviews or even contributed articles. Having a solid line-up of engaged subject matter experts, ready and fully trained to speak to the media, will be essential.

CONCLUSION

When pitching a story to the media, think beyond products and focus on your brand's broader impact on the industry, your community, or the trends taking place. Media outlets are often interested in stories that go beyond product promotions. They like stories that contribute to industry progress, sustainability, social advancement or other larger impacts. Highlighting the bigger picture showcases your brand's values and commitment to making a difference. Finally, customizing your story pitches to fit each podcast or trade publication's editorial focus and audience increases your chance of acceptance and engagement.

About Matt Spaulding

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