

## Crowded Cosmeceutical Market Requires Savvy PR

by Katherine Rothman

12/01/2008

In an increasingly competitive climate for cosmeceutical products, how can a company capture market share and increase its public profile. One of the most effective ways of doing so is via public relations—using the press and media in the form of editorial stories related to your company. Public relations translates as unbiased because it gives consumers information they need and want to know as opposed to an ad, which is basically a company singing its praises.

The idea of public relations is to create responsible “spin” and “buzz” to differentiate from the plethora of competition. Skilled PR professionals do this by linking beauty companies with something that is seasonal, controversial, related to a holiday, a trend or has a celebrity tie-in.

However, PR is a cumulative process. Some media exposure is what we refer to as a “home run” where there is a direct correlation between media exposure and new clients purchasing products. Other exposure may simply position a company as reputable but does not generate new business instantly. The latter is also extremely constructive because it generates overall name recognition. One would be amazed at how much credence women give to mentions of “XYZ” product in the media. For some customers it even carries status to say the product they use appeared in Allure or Vogue. In addition, these media placements are good for your existing customer population as it assures them they made the right choice. It is also important to use media coverage in the continued marketing of your business. You can do so by putting media coverage on your Web site, and using language in your traditional advertising such as “as seen in Elle Magazine.”

When dealing with the media, editors will always want to have samples and press kits of a product. One should never charge editors for these or ask for the products to be returned. A major detractor in terms of securing media is the business owner who is doing his own PR and who thinks he is a member of the press and tries to tell the media expert how a story should be written or slanted.

Finally, patience is truly a virtue in this area. No one becomes famous overnight. Some companies one sees all over the media have implemented PR for many years. It is not just about having one article in a magazine or one TV appearance. This exposure must occur with consistency over a period of time for the full effect to become apparent.

There are several considerations when selecting for the right PR firm for your company:

- Assess their knowledge of the cosmeceutical industry;
- Know the markets that will be pursued and make sure they are appropriate for your target audience;
- Ask for examples of successful campaign tactics, press releases and coverage from other beauty clients;
- Get references;
- Know which account executive will be handling the account, what her experience is, and what other companies the firm is handling that may pose a conflict of interest; and
- Ask for a written proposal that outlines a campaign strategy.

Ultimately, it is important both sides have a good feeling about the partnership. The PR company should be responsive to your needs, and should ensure you have a clear understanding of what your responsibilities are as a client. Ongoing communication such as weekly progress reports can help ensure all parties stay on track. If the expectations are set out and realistic (because the chance of getting on Oprah is like winning the lottery), success will follow.

Katherine Rothman is the CEO of New York-based KMR Communications Inc. ([www.kmrpr.com](http://www.kmrpr.com), [info@kmrpr.com](mailto:info@kmrpr.com)).