



## Public Relations is Key to Successful Business Development

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Public relations should take the chill out of business development. Successful PR can create an environment in which no new business meeting is truly "cold" by raising the visibility of a company and its offerings. Moreover, PR can bring measurable results to a company's bottom line and help achieve its business development goals.

Targeted, strategic public relations can produce tangible results that: promote a company's reputation, enhance brand identity, raise awareness of a company's competitive differentiators, increase name recognition in the marketplace, promote a niche expertise, target specific markets, and recruit talented staff.

### **The Value of PR**

PR is validated by the media, a distinction that sets it apart from most other communications vehicles. Using local, national and industry trade publications— both print and electronic— to educate and inform potential clients is a proven step to building a successful brand and driving continued sales growth. The first step of every successful PR or marketing program is to understand clients' core business by knowing what sets them apart from their competition.

As a company grows and changes, so do its public relations goals. When architecture firm Margulies Perruzzi Architects (MPA) became Rhino PR's first client in 2004, founding principal Marc Margulies, AIA, LEED AP, wanted to broaden clients' perceptions of the firm to include the expertise of all principals and its large team of highly talented and experienced professionals. By promoting the extensive design talent behind the firm's many new and completed projects, Rhino PR accomplished its first task. The following year we moved on to helping MPA win industry awards and accolades to further validate its design quality and successful team collaboration. In 2008, MPA marked its 20th anniversary with a new name, a new partner and new office space. Rhino PR worked closely with MPA's internal rebranding efforts to ensure that the firm's new brand and impressive longevity were recognized among its clients, colleagues and potential new business.

### **The Press Release... and Beyond**

While some company's needs are addressed by the PR basics— media relations, press releases and articles— others require a more expansive program of strategic counsel and tactical implementation. While your PR professional should excel in these basics, every tool in the PR arsenal should be considered for maximum impact.

Award programs, speaking opportunities and byline articles provide specific and high-profile outlets for touting your work and selling yourself as a seasoned expert in your field. Just as a well-written, quality RFP can win you work, so too does a well-executed award submission or well-placed byline article offer prestige and credibility.

GEI Consultants, Inc., a 40-year-old engineering firm with more than 25,000 projects completed in over 20 countries, has won several local and national marketing awards for its corporate communications plan, and has had articles placed in key technical publications such as Engineering News-Record, Civil Engineering, Brownfield Renewal, Government Engineering, and Parks & Recreation. The firm distributed nearly 40 press releases in 2010, the majority of which communicated news of new projects and expanded regions and resources.

Through active and dedicated PR, GEI has become one of the most visible brands in its target markets. Public relations has supported 100% two-year organic revenue growth in the New England region alone, and GEI is poised for continued growth in 2011 and beyond.

Public relations is a critical piece of any firm's business development efforts. With media savvy and an unyielding focus on your company's goals, public relations is a bridge to business development success.

*Have any PR-related questions or other blog article ideas? Feel free to e-mail Susan Shelby, CPSM, founder and principal of Rhino Public Relations in South Hamilton, MA, at [susan@rhinopr.com](mailto:susan@rhinopr.com).*