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Professional Services  
Boston

# Finding the Time to Invest in Your Marketing and Public Relations Program

September 23, 2011

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With Labor Day already a distant memory, noses are back to the grindstone and the pace is picking up. For marketing professionals, it's a time of year to once again remind our clients or co-workers that we're here to make their lives easier, not harder.

Marketing and PR professionals are trained to seek out opportunities – be it an interview with a trade journal or submitting an abstract to a conference on their company's behalf. At first glance, the swamped engineer or busy architect can see this as more work for them, especially when they're already spread thin with their own client management responsibilities.

However, the goal of the marketing team is to make each subsequent project an easier and more streamlined process after the initial investment of time has been made. As a rule of thumb, it's important to remember that identifying the priorities for your PR or marketing program upfront can mean less of a time commitment on your end and a clearer path to results.

## **Like Riding a Bike**

It's been proven that the brain can essentially “store” learned information about basic motor skills, like riding a bike. Though they may seem like worlds apart, marketing professionals can take your message and utilize it time and again once it's been learned and retained. Similar to how the first time riding a bicycle may have required training wheels or a steady hand to guide you, subsequent journeys were made with ease.

It's imperative to identify what's most important to your organization. Is it drafting press releases, pursuing editorial opportunities, or seeking speaking engagements? Keep in mind, each has a different workload and potential results: Press releases do require an initial information download, along with any approvals from internal staff or clients. However, a consistent pipeline

of topics for release can help the process become a routine exercise. Bylined articles can also be written by your marketing team, but will likely require an interview with a project manager or the client; however, once the article is created, it can be re-purposed time and again. Submitting an abstract for a conference will require fine-tuning upfront, but can be modified for other speaking opportunities as they are identified.

To some extent, PR and marketing professionals must do some digging before they get down to business. This may require the upfront commitment from your technical staff to share vital data about projects, alert the team of new wins, or communicate information about important industry trends. Once that background info has been obtained, however, the marketing team can truly act on their behalf without needing constant oversight and review.

The bottom line is this: You're utilizing PR and marketing professionals for their creativity. There's boundless ways they can re-use the material once the initial time commitment is made. A simple interview about a project or a five-minute review of a press release may be all that's required to bring new levels of exposure to your team's latest work.

### **An Extension and a Resource**

Taking the time to educate your staff about the goals of a marketing program can help prevent them from running for the hills when marketing and PR staff comes knocking. By explaining that the role of a marketing professional is to promote their accomplishments or support business development initiatives, perceptions can change for the better.

Consider bringing in other team members, such as engineers or field supervisors, to participate on an in-house PR committee. This will certainly yield more interesting dialog simply by gaining another point-of-view, and it provides a firsthand perspective of what is happening outside of the office.

If you have the right team of PR and marketing professionals behind you, they will find a way to work with your staff without overburdening them. While the initial request may seem like one more task on top of an already lengthy list of 'To-Do's,' a structured approach to data-gathering and defined objectives for the marketing program will make everyone's life easier and maximize the value of your investment.