



## Four Easy Steps to Bring PR into Your Marketing Plan

October 7, 2010

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The Monday morning marketing meeting starts with your managing principal announcing that your firm needs higher visibility and a public relations plan to bring new prospects to the doorstep. It seems that he's always reading about your biggest competitor and they are everywhere— from speaking engagements to projects garnering media attention.

With your head buried in proposals and new business interviews and no end in sight, how can you possibly add one more thing to your to-do list? Your marketing plan has more public relations potential than you might imagine and with a few tweaks, you can adopt four easy steps to jump-start your visibility.

### **1. Share the Load**

Every marketing plan should be a shared enterprise. Remember that individual goals are critical to achieving collective goals for your firm. Have an expert in seismic building codes? Make sure that person has annual goals for speaking opportunities, byline articles, and new business targets.

Take time to brainstorm your topics for the year on both an individual and firm-wide basis. While conference attendance is important to staying current with new trends and networking with clients and peers, encourage your experts to share their knowledge as well.

If you revisit these goals quarterly, individually, and as a group, you can better chart your firm's progress toward its annual marketing plan objectives.

### **2. Reach Out**

Every firm has PR ground support troops and it is important that you encourage their participation. Ask these key individuals to reach out to clients and ask what publications and conferences are important to their professional development and visibility. Remember that they have just as much at stake within their organization to keep current with trends and stay visible. Suggest that they offer to create a conference topic tailored to the client's goals. While they may be a supporting player, it is a valuable way to support and sustain client relationships and remain visible as a great collaborator.

Maybe they're not a public speaker? Suggest they offer to co-author an article with the client. Have troops that aren't big on writing or speaking? There are plenty of other ways to reach out, including offering to nominate your client for an industry award or honor and then attending the event.

Each of these steps has tremendous potential for additional communications vehicles, including press releases, e-mail blasts, print pieces, and web site content.

### **3. Repurpose Speaking Opportunities**

So, you've finally gotten your top technical expert into the premier conference with his very best client. Now what? Reuse this information wherever possible. Often, conference organizers are requiring program presentations to be uploaded to their web sites prior to the event. Not only does this cut down on printing costs, it also has an added benefit that the fully searchable information stays available electronically for many months. This content is ideal for turning into a byline article. Try using the conference abstract or summary as the basis for your pitch to appropriate editors.

Don't forget to let your clients know that someone is speaking at an event. It can be as simple as a personal e-mail with an offer to send along the conference presentation or a larger e-mail blast. Many firms are following up with postcards that invite past, current, and potential clients and collaborators to attend the actual event.

### **4. Repurpose Byline Articles**

Now that you've taken your conference content and gotten a byline article, remember to reuse this information as well. Think e-mail blasts with a short summary of the content, linked to the full article on your web site.

While new work initiatives will always be king, remember that the best marketing plans are those that have a diversified mix of marketing and public relations. The bottom line is that this balanced mix will always drive new business development.

#### ***About the Author***

As principal of Rhino Public Relations, Susan Shelby, CPSM, helps A/E/C clients establish and launch successful PR programs closely aligned with each client's unique goals and objectives.

Susan is a past president of SMPS Boston, co-chair of communications for NEWIRE, and a member of IFMA Boston and the Publicity Club of New England. She was named one of the "Top 10 PR Specialists" by Women's Business Boston two years in a row. For more information, please visit [www.rhinopr.com](http://www.rhinopr.com).