



Get Some New Ink!

PR & Media Relations Will Best Promote Your Hair Restoration Specialties

By: Larry H. Oskin, President, Marketing Solutions

Creative salon marketing strategies should include a consistent media and public relations effort, yet most salons, hair restoration centers, laser clinics and medical spas never attempt this valuable direction. You really should look to develop a complete media relations strategy that will build credibility for your salon to promote your hair restoration, laser therapy and hair extension business within the professional beauty trade publications as well as within your own local community.

Advertising & Marketing Versus PR: You must first be able to define the differences in your marketing strategies. Please do not refer to advertising as PR ... or PR as advertising. They are very different. Advertising is paid media with print or display advertisements in newspapers, magazines or online. Advertorials may be created to look like an advertisement, yet in the small print they must say "advertisement". Infomercials on TV and the radio must alert the viewers and listeners that it is a paid program.

"PR", "public relations" and "media relations" are different! They are editorial feature stories and they are not paid for. You will be able to achieve FREE PR and media exposure, if you can help educate the community of readers, listeners and viewers.

Special Seasonal Media Calendar Events:

Develop an annual marketing calendar with advertising, merchandising and promotional plans that are supported by public and media relation strategies. You should first begin to create specific calendarized media events that can be promoted to the local newspapers, magazines, websites, radio and TV shows. Seasonal Hair Fashion Updates, Halloween, Election Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Year-End Holidays, New Years, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Graduations and Prom Season – all make for absolutely great PR gambits. No matter what the season is, you can also make news! The media is always looking for ways to help their readers and viewers with expert advice. If you take a non-commercial education oriented approach, you and your salon team will win big with important ongoing local and national media exposure.

Special Charitable & Community Events: Community service events and charitable fundraisers are a terrific way to attract local and national media attention. Whether or not your salon offers complete professional full-service hair, skin or nail services – you can still promote your specialties with hair restoration, wigs, wefts, hair extensions and all related therapy services. Your team of hairstylists, nail artists and estheticians can create a 'Spa-A-Thon', 'Cut-A-Thon' or a 'Nail-A-Thon' within your salon or at some community center. You could even work with cosmetology students from nearby cosmetology schools to assist your salon and spa professionals.

You can invite in folks from the local chapters of the Locks For Love, American Cancer Society, National Breast Cancer Foundation, Susan G. Komen or any one of many agencies that deal with clients and patients who suffer from alopecia, cancer and other related hair loss traumas. They can be there to offer free consultations, advice and education. They may even have the ability to attract some local celebrity spokespeople, athletes, politicians and TV news anchors that may be able to come down for autographs and photographs.

Your special charitable event could offer haircuts, manicures, massage, chair massage and facials for full price service donations or a slight discount, with all of the proceeds going to the local charity. You can create exciting door prizes and raffles with products, all of which will help you make 'news'.

What's most important for any special event marketing like this – is the pre-event publicity. Create press releases with photographs taken beforehand to use this event to attract new clients to your salon, clinic or hair restoration center. A post-event press release with a check presentation photograph will also share your community spirit while noting how much money you have donated. You can have a local office supply enlarge a copy of your check to 3 to 5+ feet long, for this special PR photo opportunity. Try to get a great PR photograph of important celebrity guests with the charitable representatives in front of your salon or clinic – so your business name will potentially be published in the local media.

Ask your manufacturer and distributor partners to put you on their PR Mailing List. You can rewrite some of their information and facts, while customizing it locally for your own hair restoration salon, media spa or laser clinic.

The most important tool for any salon or hair restoration business is to have is a completely integrated public relations and marketing program that will professionally build your business in the future. As a business owner, you should market yourself to the local the media, to the national and international beauty trade media, as well as the national consumer media to build your business. There is no better way to achieve this than by starting with impressive press kits.

When designed properly, these Media Kits can double as new patient / client kits to professionally introduce the benefits of your entire hair restoration business.

A good Media or Press Kit will accurately depict the personality of your salon, clinic or hair restoration business as well as your staff's specialties. Consider the fact that your PR Kits will be the first impression of your hair restoration business that can make or break you with the media. These kits must be colorful and very impressive! Based upon your Media Kit, targeted media types and potential new hair restoration clients will decide if they desire what your business has to offer. The idea behind a Media Kit is to immediately spark the interest of media types, editors, freelance writers and TV producers. Press Kits should be designed to make the media's job easier by giving editors, writers and broadcast producers enough information to successfully write or explore an interesting new feature story about your hair restoration business.

Media Kit Essentials:

- The Hair Restoration Business Story:** Tell about your hair restoration services, staff specialties, state-of-the-art equipment, advanced certifications, education, honors and achievements. It should have some kind of a unique angle that separates your hair restoration business from other local salons, laser clinics and beautycare resources. Be ready to share what makes you unique and distinctively different
- Biography:** Create a one-page briefing about your media spokesperson, whether this will be the business owner or artistic director.
- Professional Photographs:** Today, you can include digital CD's, DVD's or photographic prints. If photography opportunities will be available at some special event, please note that in your cover pitch letters.
- Fact Sheets:** Share bullet points about your salon, hair restoration business and products – with a list of your awards, accomplishments, accolades and success stories.
- Frequently Asked Questions About ~ Hair Restoration:** Create a list all FAQ's --- frequently asked questions with answers about your services and products. Use single-sentence questions or limit each answer to one brief paragraph. This will help journalists and media contacts, because you have cut down on their work by thinking of the questions for them, while perhaps even increase the odds of them writing about you.
- Press Releases:** Always include at least one exciting and newsworthy one-page press release that is not overtly commercial. Share news, information and facts while telling the readers what they can learn from you and your hair restoration business.
- PR Reprints:** Plan to include copies of any previous press coverage your store has received in the past. Show off the magazine or newspaper logo, by saying 'As Seen In', before reprinting the stories on a page. Full color PR Reprints are best. Put your logo and address somewhere on these pages while deleting the dates, before printing – so they will become timeless reminders of your media honors.
- Hair Restoration Brochures:** Include hair restoration service brochures, manufacturer brochures and any current marketing materials, like your newsletter.
- Business Cards:** Include one or two extras, so they may be shared with their staff or freelance writers.
- PR Pitch Letters:** This should be a personalized cover letter for each targeted media contact. It must offer a basic introduction with at least three or four potentially unique story angle ideas.
- Sample Products:** Don't be afraid to include a special product or some imprinted advertising logo specialty or any beautycare product sample that relates to your proposed hair restoration news and story ideas.

Press Releases:

It is very important to create a one-page Press Release that announces some important news, staff promotions, awards, accolades, a special event or charitable fundraiser. These media releases should be professionally typewritten and printed on your stationery in a formal press release format. You can send a news release out as often as once every 4 to 6 weeks to the local or national media. Be careful not to send too many, too often. Be careful to always carefully write press releases and pitch to their target audiences!

Timing Is Everything ~ Use Editorial Calendars:

You will need to work on creating your PR programs at least 3 to 6 months in advance when attempting local, regional or national media coverage to promote your hair restoration business. For the local media as well as the national beauty trade media, you can easily ask for their Annual Editorial Calendars. These are often available online, by visiting their websites.

Most local newspapers and magazines will have special salon, health, wellness and spa sections with different themes throughout the year. Many of the national beauty trade and salon magazines will have at least one issue per year where they will focus on topics like hair restoration, men's services, wigs and hair extensions per year. For example, if the local media is featuring wedding stories in May, then you should be pitching them 3 months in advance with bridal beautycare and haircare solutions in February or March. Offer to share tips on hair restoration, makeup, skincare, hairstyle products, hair ornaments and appliances that will make a bride's special day – one where she will look and feel spectacular. You need to be there for the editors and TV producers 2 to 3 months in advance when they are writing and assigning these stories, rather than the month before – when the story is complete.

Target Media Lists:

Create a computerized database with each of the local editors, radio and TV producers on it. Include their names, titles, addresses, email addresses, websites, fax and telephone numbers. You will need to create a separate target media list for national publications and TV shows. Keep track of any local writer or TV producer that shares any beauty care feature story as they may also be open to a future feature story on hair restoration. Keep your target media lists updated.

PR Pitch Points: Create a list of variable PR pitch point ideas, like:

- Hair Restoration ~ The True Story!
- New & Specialty Hair Restoration Options
- Laser Hair Restoration ~ Magical Makeovers
- The Long Story On Wigs & Wefts ~ For Women & Men
- Hair Extensions ~ More Than Length! Add New Volume, Haircolor, Highlights & Body
- Professional Hair Extension Makeovers

Mail Versus Email: Today, you can pitch the media with email blasts or by traditional mail packages. We recommend that you use both, until you learn what your targeted editors prefer.

Pitching The Local Media:

Plan to personally follow up each mailed press kit with a telephone call! Call to make sure they received your press kit, while personally offering some attractive hair restoration and makeover feature story ideas. This will add familiarity and give them the opportunity to ask questions. Don't be afraid to pitch to their voicemails. Be gentle and not too pushy. Become a valuable resource, not a pest.

Just be careful as these targeted media contacts will not be ready to promote your hair restoration expertise every week or month. You will be able to share the wealth of your expertise and knowledge once or twice per year with most media contacts. You must understand that no matter how good your relationship becomes, they will need to mix it up taking turns with various subjects and experts.

Professional PR Resources: You can certainly create and facilitate a PR campaign all by yourself! Or, you can search to see if someone on your team has the abilities and experience to facilitate a PR Program for your store. You can also certainly explore local freelance writers, publicists or PR agencies. You can also use PR and marketing agencies that specialize in the professional beauty business, while fully understanding the hair restoration, laser, wig, hair extension and related businesses.

PR Must Be A Never Ending Strategy! It is always going to be a great time to expose your business expertise in the areas of hair restoration, hair extensions, wigs, lasers, image enhancement and all of your other unique beauty care specialties. There will always be new women and men who grow older, develop cancer, alopecia or hair loss challenges. You will just need to be there, when the time comes. As you develop media relationships, you will find the more PR you get, the more PR you will get. Now is the time to take on the challenge of creating an annual marketing campaign that is focused on a superior PR and media relations campaign!

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