



Press Releases & Media Relations Will Successfully Promote Your Spa Specialties

By: Larry H. Oskin, President, Marketing Solutions

Creative spa marketing strategies should include a consistent media and public relations effort, yet most day spas, resorts and wellness centers never attempt this valuable direction. The most important tool for any day spa, resort spa or medical spa business is to have a completely integrated marketing program that will professionally build and brand your business with public relations as the primary driving force. As a spa business owner, you must market yourself to the local media, to the

Understand 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 & Press Releases: "PR", "public relations" and "media relations" are different! They are professional press releases, media announcements and editorial feature stories. 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 PR & Media Calendars: Develop an annual Marketing Calendar with advertising and promotional plans that are supported by public relations strategies. Create a specific calendar of media events that can be promoted to the local newspapers, magazines, websites, radio and TV shows. Seasonal spa services, charitable events, Christmas, Year-End Holidays, New Years, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day – all make for absolutely great PR launch pads. 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 throughout the year.

Press Releases: It is very important to create a one-page Press Release that announces some important spa 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 and national media. Be careful not to send too many, too often. Be careful to always carefully write press releases and pitch directly to their specific target audiences!

Anatomy Of A Quality Press Release:

- ❑ **Press Releases:** Always include at least one exciting and newsworthy one-page press release that is not overtly commercial. Share spa news, information and facts while telling the readers what they can learn from you and your spa business within your Media Kit.
- ❑ **Strong Headlines:** Tell what you are going to tell in a brief statement
- ❑ **Press Release Body Copy:** Tell what, when, who, where and why in a very organized manner.
- ❑ **Share Credentials:** Before your conclusion share a brief review of your spa awards, certifications and honors.
- ❑ **Contact Information:** Be sure each press release has a final sentence with a call to action offering free / complimentary consultations, your address, telephone number, email address and website.
- ❑ **PR By Mail vs. Email:** You can pitch the media with email blasts or by traditional mail. We recommend that you use both, until you learn what your media contacts prefer.

Spa Media Kits:

There is no better way to achieve a strong reception for your press releases than by placing them within impressive Press Kits. When designed properly, these Media Kits will double as new patient / client kits to professionally introduce the benefits of your spa. A good Media or Press Kit will accurately depict the personality of your spa business as well as your staff's specialties. Consider the fact that your PR Kits will be the first impression of your spa that can make or break you with the media. These kits must be colorful and very impressive! These should be designed to make it easier for the media by giving editors, writers and TV producers enough information to successfully write or explore an interesting new feature story about your spa.

Media Kit Essentials & Extras:

- ❑ **Spa Business Story:** Tell about your spa services, staff specialties, state-of-the-art equipment, advanced certifications, education, honors and achievements. It should have a unique angle that separates your spa from other local salons, spas, wellness centers and beautycare resources.
- ❑ **Spa Spokesperson Biography:** Create a one-page briefing about your spa media spokesperson.
- ❑ **Professional Photographs:** Include digital CD's, DVD's or photographic prints. If photography opportunities will be available at some special spa event, note that in your cover pitch letters.
- ❑ **Spa Fact Sheets:** Share bullet points about your spa services, business and products – with a list of your awards, accomplishments, accolades and success stories.
- ❑ **PR Reprints:** Plan to include full color 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. Put your logo and address somewhere on these pages while deleting the dates, before printing – so they will become timeless reminders of your spa media honors.
- ❑ **Spa Brochures:** Include spa service brochures and any current marketing materials, like your spa newsletter.
- ❑ **Business Cards:** Include 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 spa story angle ideas.

Timing Is Everything ~ Use Editorial Calendars: Create and facilitate your press releases and media programs at least 3 months in advance when attempting local or national media coverage to promote your spa. For the local media as well as the national spa trade media, you can easily ask for their Annual Editorial Calendars. These are often available online, by visiting their websites. Most print media and magazines will have special salon, health, wellness and spa sections with different themes throughout the year.

Build Your Spa 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 spa or beautycare feature story as they may also be open to a future feature story. Keep your target media lists updated.

- Create PR Pitch Points:** Create a list of variable PR pitch point ideas, like:
- **Gifts Of Beauty!** How to celebrate any season with spa gift certificates
 - **New & Specialty Body Treatments**
 - **How To Put The Aaaaah In Spa!**
 - **Special Spa Getaways For Couples, Lovers & Friends**
 - **Serious Spa Makeovers**
 - **New State-Of-The-Art Spa &Aesthetic Technologies**

Start Successfully Pitching The Local Media:

Plan to follow up each mailed press kit with a personal telephone call! Call to make sure they received your press kit, while personally offering some attractive spa feature story ideas. This will give you and them the opportunity to ask questions, so you may better meet their editorial needs. Pitch to their voicemails if needed. Be gentle and not too pushy.

Become a valuable media resource. These media contacts will not be ready to promote your spa expertise every week or month. You will be able to share the wealth of your expertise and knowledge at least 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.

Use Professional PR Resources: You can certainly create and facilitate a press release with a complete PR campaign on your own. You should also search for local freelance writers, publicists and professional public relations agencies. You should try to use PR and marketing agencies that specialize in the professional beauty, salon and spa businesses.

PR Must Be A Never Ending Strategy! It is always going to be a great time to expose your spa business expertise in the areas of aesthetics, laser therapies, massage, facials, hair removal, aromatherapy, hydrotherapy, body treatments and all of your other unique beautycare specialties. You will just need to be there for the media, when they need you. 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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Editorial Notes: Larry H. Oskin is president of Marketing Solutions, Inc., a full-service marketing, advertising, graphic design, photography and PR agency specializing in the professional beauty industry. Clients include salons, spas, medical spas, medical clinics, associations, distributors and manufacturers. Marketing Solutions is located at 10875 Main Street, Suite 205 in Fairfax, VA 22030. For more information call 703-359-6000 EXT: 22, Email LOskin@MktgSols.com or visit www.MktgSols.com.