

About the Author

Walt Denny is the president of Walt Denny, Inc. Walt Denny, Inc. is an advertising/public relations agency that focuses primarily on home products clients such as KitchenAid brand, L.E. Johnson Products and Whirlpool Corp. "The Home Products Agency" was established in 1989. For more information, please log onto www.waltdenny.com.



Most companies are clamoring for the publicity spotlight at trade shows. However, a successful show is about much more than the impression you make at the event itself. You need to leverage a variety of public relations (PR) tools and activities before, during and after a trade show to ensure maximum traffic for your booth and publicity for your company. Every trade show is a unique opportunity to build relationships with prospects and the media, and a chance to promote new offerings. In a nutshell, whether you're selling home products or financial services, creating the right PR buzz around a trade show can support a company's long-term sales and marketing goals, yielding high returns.

Participating in trade shows is an excellent investment, and you want to make each show count. Being physically present at a show doesn't guarantee traffic or publicity. Pre-show PR is critical, especially if you plan to showcase a new product or service at the event. You should plan booth activities and support materials months in advance. Be sure to provide professional-caliber press kits to journalists and editors to target trade and business media,

Create the Exhibitor PR BUZZ

Leverage PR Tools Before, During and After Trade Shows

ideally, a few weeks before the show. This will capture their attention more than a last-minute news release. A couple of weeks before the show, editors should receive personal invitations by phone or e-mail to meet with senior PR staff, product experts and company executives at the event.

Garnering publicity for a new product or service before a trade show is a strategic way to guarantee more booth traffic and attention on the floor, which can mean more qualified sales leads and post-show PR. For instance, if you place an article about your new product in a trade magazine to run a

month before a show, your target audience is more likely to make a point of visiting your booth. Media professionals who see a compelling news release or article will have time to consider how they might cover your product post-show, so you'll have more meaningful conversations at the event. Prospects already will have considered how your product can help them, so you will be closer to capturing qualified leads. While it is tempting to try to make a big splash by announcing a new product at a show, it is better to create a good PR buzz by seeking publicity beforehand.

Sustaining PR buzz at a trade show means making the right impression. Be sure to bring plenty of press kits for editors and journalists, and keep all scheduled appointments with members of the media. If possible, make key company executives available to editors



for questions. Also, keep a detailed written log of the information and products discussed with each media contact so you can make appropriate follow-up calls, respond to specific requests and set up post-show meetings or conference calls. While big names often steal the spotlight, if you have been thorough in your preshow PR activities and are well-prepared for the event, your company will be noticed.

Dropping the ball after a trade show is a common mistake. The show must go on and that means postshow PR, which is critical for growing relationships with prospects and media and paving the way for future sales and publicity. Follow-up is the bottom line. Send timely thank-you letters to each member of the media who met with your company's representatives, briefly recapping the meeting and any story ideas you discussed. Follow up quickly on action items such as requests for information or interviews from editors or journalists who came to your booth. Doing so fosters a productive, ongoing dialog, which can keep your company top-of-mind and the door open for more publicity.

Trade show PR requires time, resources and the ability to adhere to a well-thought-out plan. Many companies outsource to PR agencies with proven expertise in trade show PR to ensure that their customers, prospects and the media receive the attention they deserve. Most PR agencies have relationships with journalists and editors at business and trade publications, and can open dialogs with editors who may want to publish stories on specific topics such as home products or financial services. Agencies can handle everything from PR plans and news releases to pitching stories to media before, during and after a show.

As a result of your efforts, your company will create the right PR buzz at the right time.



For more information on this subject, write in 1010 on the reader service card.



Learn More!

For more information related to this article, go to www.wqpmag.com/lm.cfm/wq020400

The right solution for all your

OZONIA

OZONE & UV Water Treatment Needs

- High Output, Energy Efficient Units
- Easy Installation, Compact Packages
- Complete Systems Integration

- ✓ Water & Waste Water Disinfection
- ✓ Pool, Spa & Recreational Water Treatment
- ✓ High Purity Water Treatment
- ✓ Food & Beverage
- ✓ Surface Sanitization

MEDIUM PRESSURE UV SYSTEMS

- Single lamp medium pressure UV systems offer compact installation with lower maintenance.
- RLA, "Rapid Lamp Assembly" affords the industry's easiest, fastest lamp replacement.

HIGHER EFFICIENCY UV LAMPS AVAILABLE

OZONE INJECTION SYSTEMS

COMPLETE SYSTEMS OR INDIVIDUAL UNITS AVAILABLE

- High ozone concentrations to 150
- Virtually unbreakable dielectrics
- Compact, modular construction

Ozonía North America 201-794-3100 491 EDWARD H. ROSS DRIVE • ELMWOOD PARK, NJ 07407

Switzerland, Phone +41 (1) 801 85 11 • Scotland, Phone +44 (141) 810 48 61 • Russia, Phone +7 (8312) 33 44 84 • South Korea, Phone +82 (2) 631 03 30

www.ozonia.com